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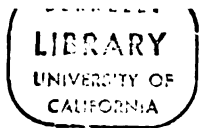
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**DOCUMENTS ON  
BRITISH  
FOREIGN POLICY  
1919-1939**

EDITED BY

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European Affairs

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## P R E F A C E

VOLUME VI of the Second Series of these documents dealt with the situation created by the breakdown of the Disarmament Conference and the increasingly rapid progress of German rearmament, still illegal according to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, between November 1933 and August 3, 1934; the present volume tells the story of further British reactions down to April 18, 1935, to the continuing German search for *Gleichberechtigung*. This culminated in Herr Hitler's unilateral rearmament declaration of March 16, 1935, and the condemnation of his action by the British, French, and Italian Governments at the Stresa conference (April 11-14, 1935) and by the Council of the League of Nations at Geneva (April 17, 1935).

These months were not without their anxieties for His Majesty's Government in other directions. Discussions with the Japanese and United States Governments in the last months of 1934 as to the programme for the 1935 naval conference were followed by the Japanese declaration of withdrawal from the Washington treaty system in December 1934 and the frustration in both London and Tokyo of hopes of an Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement*. Documents relating to these naval discussions down to the conclusion of the naval conference in March 1936 will be printed in Volume XIII of this Series, which will also include documents relating to the further phase of Anglo-German relations from mid-April to November 1935. The winter of 1934-5 saw, too, the growth, following the Walwal affair of December 5, 1934, of Italo-Ethiopian tension. This will be the subject of Volume XIV. These naval, Far Eastern, and African developments were, nevertheless, relatively minor distractions in the period covered by this volume, and it was the German problem that loomed largest in the Foreign Office view.

Sir John Simon, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, had held the office since November 9, 1931, and was experienced in the ways of dictators; he had the benefit of abundant briefing by the officials, who could not, however, supply a final agreed verdict as to Herr Hitler's intentions. During the early months of 1934 it had still been the declared policy of the British Government to provide satisfactorily for Germany's future by using the machinery of the Disarmament Conference, unlikely though the success of this policy now seemed. Germany had withdrawn from both the Conference and the League of Nations in October 1933, but showed some willingness for negotiations away from Geneva, and appeared to desire an Anglo-German agreement. Both the British and the Italian Governments had hopes of a bargain whereby Germany would accept a limited measure of rearmament in return for its legalization. The hope that Herr Hitler could be separated from the 'wild men' of his party and brought into a satisfactory agreement with the western powers was, it would seem, generally accepted

at the time by those of Sir John Simon's advisers who were most closely concerned with German affairs. Mr. Eden, Lord Privy Seal, who had been active in the negotiations since the beginning of 1934, felt able to tell Signor Mussolini on February 26 that the Germans appeared 'genuinely to desire peace in order to push on with the fifteen years' internal programme which they had in view' (Volume VI, No. 322). This view was echoed in a Cabinet paper of March 21, 1934, drafted in the Central Department of the Foreign Office, which stated that Part V (the disarmament clauses) of the Treaty of Versailles was, for practical purposes, dead; 'if there is to be a funeral, it is clearly better to arrange it while Hitler is still in a mood to pay the undertakers for their services' (*ibid.*, No. 363). Even Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, in his long memorandum for the Cabinet of April 7, 1934 (*ibid.*, Appendix III), concluded an elaborate justification of the Defence Requirements Committee's recommendation, that Germany should be taken as the country's ultimate potential enemy in relation to the planning of long-range defence, by remarking, 'Personally, I doubt whether anything much would be gained by a weakening of Hitler—on the contrary'.<sup>1</sup> Early in 1934 Germany professed willingness to agree to a bargain whereby her army would be limited to 300,000 men and her defensive air force to 50 per cent of the military aircraft possessed by France; the total rejection of this plan by the French Government on April 17 had been influenced by the German Government's announcement of a greatly expanded programme of military expenditure a few days earlier, but the Germans could nevertheless now assert that they had been rebuffed after proposing a reasonable settlement, compatible with French preponderance (cf. No. 222 below).

Even the most optimistic interpretation of Herr Hitler's mood suggested, however, that his willingness for agreement was a wasting asset and that French policy, whatever its emotional justification, was squandering opportunities. Signor Suvich, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, had visited M. Doumergue, the French Minister President, immediately after seeing the French note of April 17, and had been assured that the French had no desire to adopt violent methods against Germany; 'they could not contemplate a preventive war' in spite of Germany's defiance of the Treaty of Versailles (Volume VI, No. 402). The alternative that the French Government favoured during the following weeks was the strengthening of French security with an Eastern pact on Locarno lines. During discussions in London with M. Barthou, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, on July 9, Sir John Simon sought to reconcile this Eastern pact with an agreement about armaments which might facilitate German participation. M. Barthou refused to allow a

<sup>1</sup> The story of the Defence Requirements Committee (D.R.C.) and subsequent Cabinet discussions will be told in the forthcoming volume on *Grand Strategy*, vol. i (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London) by Professor N. H. Gibbs. The committee, which ranked as a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, was composed of Sir Maurice Hankey, Sir Warren Fisher, and Sir R. Vansittart, together with members of the Chiefs of Staff Sub-committee. It sat between November 14, 1933, and February 28, 1934.

measure of German rearmament to be made a pre-condition of the signature of the pact, but he did undertake that if Germany joined the pact it should be truly reciprocal, that is, if Germany 'asked for a French guarantee against Russia, France would give it'. On this understanding the British Government agreed to recommend the pact in Berlin, Warsaw, and Rome, although with doubts as to whether Germany would accept the 'Eastern Locarno' without a solution of 'the question of equality of rights in armaments' (*ibid.*, Nos. 487, 488, and Annex to No. 489).

Otherwise the discussions during the summer of 1934 had shown that the British Government had little to offer the French in their agonizing dilemma, for Sir John Simon had had to make it clear 'that the United Kingdom was not itself about to undertake any new commitment in Europe' (*ibid.*, p. 814). The ban on new commitments excluded any demonstrative approval of Signor Mussolini's support for Austria or any strengthened guarantees of Belgium, Holland, or Turkey, which were spoken of at the time (Nos. 7, 64, 123 below). A Ministerial Committee on Disarmament was set up by the Cabinet on May 2 to examine the report of the Defence Requirements Committee; by mid-July it had decided against any early extensive measure of rearmament, partly because of the strength of pacifist opinion, partly because of the urgent desire to remove the remaining cuts and extra tax burdens imposed in 1931. In putting this recommendation to the Cabinet the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, argued that the chief danger now came from Germany and not from Japan, and that the chief danger from Germany was in the air. The over-all effect of the Chancellor's recommendations, which the Cabinet accepted substantially, was to reduce a balanced programme of £75,000,000 put forward by the D.R.C. to one of two-thirds its size and to concentrate on air defence in Europe. The programme was approved by the Cabinet on July 18, announced briefly to the House of Commons next day, and justified as a programme of air rearmament by Mr. Baldwin on July 30. He threw in the remark that with regard to the defence of England 'you no longer think of the chalk cliffs of Dover; you think of the Rhine'. Both Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Warren Fisher, the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, were enamoured of the idea of a revival of the Anglo-Japanese friendship as a means of facilitating the concentration of military effort in Europe. Further references to these views will appear in the next volume of this Series.

The documents printed in Chapter I show the continued failure of the western powers during the autumn of 1934 to establish a *modus vivendi* with Germany on their own terms. In a number of concrete issues which directly concerned her their proposals were met by argumentative and essentially negative replies from Berlin which, however, never quite closed the door on future discussions. The biggest disappointment was Germany's virtual rejection of the Eastern Pact on September 10 (cf. No. 85). Poland followed on September 27 by making Germany's signature a *sine qua non* of Polish acceptance (No. 121). The German Government's reply drew a distinction between pacts of mutual assistance and pacts of non-aggression, which it

preferred; it also preferred bilateral to multilateral pacts. M. Barthou's decision to push on with negotiations for the pact despite Germany's abstention conjured up possibilities of a separate Franco-Soviet agreement and this was viewed uneasily by the Foreign Office as the possible prelude to a revival of pre-war alliances. The German Government was also not prepared to join the Danubian pact proposed by the Italian Government, at any rate not without further elucidation of its meaning; nor would it follow the British in expressing 'public sympathy and approval' for the plan (No. 96). In the Saar question the German Government seemed determined to make heavy weather despite many signs that the League of Nations was prepared to carry out fairly the plebiscite provided by the Treaty of Versailles. The personal safety of Mr. G. G. Knox, a member of the British Diplomatic Service who had been seconded in April 1932 for service as Chairman of the Saar Governing Commission, was a matter of some concern to the Foreign Office (cf. No. 77).

Chapters I and II include a selection of documents relating to German fiscal problems which are chiefly of interest in connexion with Foreign Office concern over Treasury policy. The prolonged non-payment of commercial debts owed to British firms, which resulted from the restricted allocation of foreign exchange to German importers, was primarily a matter for the Board of Trade and the Treasury. It led to a British protest note to the German Government of August 15 (Nos. 23, 24, 27), and was only one aspect of the wider problem of German finance under Dr. Schacht, President of the Reichsbank. Mr. Neville Chamberlain was led to ask Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, Economic Adviser to His Majesty's Government, in September, 'Is Dr. Schacht mad? Why does he want to alienate his best friends?' (No. 125). Nevertheless the Treasury persisted, through Sir Frederick, in its search for a working arrangement with the German authorities, and concluded an Anglo-German debt and exchange agreement on November 1, which made the United Kingdom by far the largest source of free exchange to Germany in subsequent years. A note of October 30 recorded the fact that the Foreign Office had not been consulted about this agreement (No. 154). Sir R. Vansittart, agreeing with those officials in the Foreign Office who believed that in present circumstances it was best to 'keep Germany lean', voiced his uneasiness at these developments in a private letter to Sir F. Leith-Ross in December (No. 298).

This did not, however, preclude the belief that as no-one was prepared to coerce Germany the best course was to renew and complete the negotiations for an arms agreement on the best terms available, instead of allowing matters to drift until Herr Hitler became completely intransigent. All the alternatives were, however, elaborately discussed (cf. e.g. Nos. 211, 235). The reports of Sir Eric Phipps, the British Ambassador in Berlin at this period, were shrewd, often brilliant, caustic, and, on the ultimate issue of Nazi intentions, perhaps indecisive; but he did hold out hopes that Herr Hitler still regarded an agreement as expedient (e.g. No. 190). The documents in Chapter II deal with the first steps of the British Government towards



an agreement, accelerated by the amendment to the Address which Mr. Churchill was to move in the Commons on November 28 concerning the inadequate state of British armaments, especially in the air. A ministerial committee presided over by the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, held three meetings (November 22, 25) and had before it a long Foreign Office memorandum (No. 211); Sir Eric Phipps, summoned to London, presented two memoranda to the committee which affirmed in guarded terms the belief that Herr Hitler would consider an agreement expedient (No. 208). By publicly accepting, as an accomplished fact, while condemning the existing level of German armaments, Mr. Baldwin, in his speech to the House of Commons on November 28, opened the way for negotiations in which the legalization of Germany's armaments at a reasonable figure would be balanced by various gestures and guarantees on her part.

As it was considered axiomatic that Britain and France should keep in step the next stage was to hammer out a joint Anglo-French programme. M. Laval, who had succeeded M. Barthou after his assassination on October 9, had continued the policy of drawing closer to the Soviet Union and Italy. He now preferred to postpone discussions with the British until the completion early in January 1935 of the negotiations with Italy initiated by M. Barthou. Meanwhile the British Government contributed to the peaceful solution of the Saar problem by providing the largest contingent to a small international force which supervised the plebiscite of January 13. The British initiative was seen to have gained a certain success in the Anglo-French programme set out in the Anglo-French declaration of February 3, 1935.

The ample documentation relating to these little known negotiations with the French and the immediate German reaction to them form the main subject of Chapter III. The shape of the Anglo-French discussions was dictated by the willingness of the British to act as mediators and their unwillingness to move substantially beyond their existing commitments. A Foreign Office proposal of January 17 for a declaration of Anglo-French solidarity had been postponed by Sir J. Simon on tactical grounds, and he rejected a French proposal for the announcement of Anglo-French staff talks (Nos. 349, 368). On the other hand the Cabinet rejected on February 2 his own proposal for the immediate announcement of an Anglo-French air pact, as desired by the French. They, while admitting that their attitude to the German armaments' offer on April 17, 1934, could no longer be maintained (No. 311), were prepared to agree to the legalization of German armaments only on stringent terms: Germany should rejoin the League, and accept the air, Eastern, and Danubian pacts, together with a level of armaments compatible with French superiority. Negotiations on all these points could go ahead, but nothing must be concluded until all were complete. This became known as the principle of simultaneity. The German reaction was not, however, entirely discouraging (No. 446), and this, combined with the repeated hints of a willingness to contemplate bilateral agreements, especially with Great Britain, allowed hope of a general settlement to linger on in the Foreign

Office and the Cabinet, although progress remained dependent on British initiative alone.

How far these sanguine views were capable of realization must be judged by the documents in the two final chapters, IV and V. The first deals with the chequered course of the arrangements for the meeting of Herr Hitler with Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden, which finally took place on March 25 and 26 in Berlin. Hints continued to reach London during February as to German interest in the visit of some high British figure; Mr. Baldwin, Sir John Simon, and even Sir R. Vansittart were mentioned (Nos. 470, 504). The Foreign Office, while accepting the case for negotiations with Germany, was divided as to the desirability of a closer Soviet-French rapprochement should they fail (No. 484). Its own preference was for some alternative to the Eastern Pact, as formulated in July 1934, which would be based on the provisions for non-aggression already in force in Eastern Europe (No. 468), which it was hoped might interest the Germans. It was recognized, however, that the German desire for some form of air pact provided the only real bargaining card for use in the negotiations. The chances of German agreement to anything approaching the full list of French demands never seemed high, and there was always obvious anxiety in Paris and Rome lest the visit of British ministers should sow distrust between the western powers while merely increasing German self-confidence. The French and Italian Governments could not be persuaded on March 23 to offer more than a grudging expression of good wishes for the success of the confrontation, and they stipulated that the three powers should meet to review the position at Stresa on April 11. The timing of the visit posed obvious problems of diplomatic tactics and Sir R. Vansittart was much relieved by a postponement on Sir E. Phipps' advice in mid-February, although the reasons for this are not altogether clear (Nos. 441, 490). After the German display of anger over the British White Paper on defence of March 4 and Herr Hitler's postponement of the visit (No. 526), Sir R. Vansittart considered the Cabinet's willingness to press ahead with the visit immediately after the German announcement of rearmament on March 16 to be unwise; but Sir E. Phipps approved (No. 584), and Sir John Simon defended the decision later (No. 604, note 6). The elaborate British minutes on the discussions at Berlin are printed as document No. 651, and may be compared with the somewhat shorter German account in the *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series C, Volume III.

Discussions followed with the Soviet, French, and Italian Governments to consider Herr Hitler's attitude and to examine means of implementing the Anglo-French declaration of February 3. Full reports of these discussions are printed in Chapter V. They start with Mr. Eden's talks in Moscow (March 28, 29), Warsaw (April 2, 3), and Prague (April 4). They led him to emphasize in some notes of April 7 (he was unable to present them in person to the Cabinet owing to illness) the existence of a 'certain suspicion of British foreign policy, varying in intensity, in each of the capitals I visited'. He recommended that the Government should be 'stalwart in support of the

League and the **collective** peace system' (No. 701). Sir Eric Phipps also thought that the **best** course might be to 'see if something can be done to strengthen the League' but he was certain that 'a Bull of Excommunication solemnly pronounced at Stresa will hardly have much effect on Hitler's nerves', and he thought that a great deal of the discussion which was going on was beside the point. 'Hitler's policy to-day has no definite aim in view. It is his intention to make this country so strong that when an opportunity does occur Germany will be able to avail herself of it.' (No. 694)

A complete account of the Stresa discussions is printed for the first time as document No. 722. It shows all three participating groups of delegates pessimistic in varying degrees as to future German developments, and each inclining to maintain its own previously defined attitude in the absence of more viable alternatives. Much of the earlier discussion was concerned with the exact meaning of the recent Berlin talks, but French policy was defined in M. Laval's words at the first meeting: 'French policy was not aimed at the encirclement of Germany, but if Germany refused to take part in the organisation of security, the other Powers would have to do what they could without her in the hope that she would participate later.' This meant in practice that France was prepared to depart from her own principle of simultaneity in the negotiations with Germany in matters relating to the security of the remaining powers. 'They still insisted', said M. Laval, 'on the indivisibility of the problems set forth in the London communiqué [of February 3]; but in view of the grave dangers of air attack, they had tried to find a means by which the Locarno Powers could benefit by the provisions of an air pact in advance of the conclusion of the general agreement.' He also announced that the French Government had decided to conclude a pact of mutual assistance with Russia, 'and they considered that German dilatoriness had completely absolved them from any charge of undue speed'. The French draft resolution for the Council of the League condemning Germany's repudiation of international obligations with regard to armaments recommended that financial and economic sanctions should be contemplated in cases of future unilateral repudiations by any state, and a French memorandum communicated to the British delegation on April 13, which was not, however, discussed at the conference, examined the feasibility of economic or financial pressure to hinder German rearmament (No. 723). Throughout the discussions Signor Mussolini appeared to stand solidly by the French, although he was noticeably less concerned than they over the susceptibilities of the Little Entente on the question of the rearmament of the former smaller ex-enemy states.

Influenced perhaps by Mr. Eden's urgings, Mr. MacDonald opened the conference on April 11 by affirming Great Britain's continued loyalty to the League, her pursuit of collective security, her search for 'scales of armaments agreed upon by binding instruments' and secured by 'checks or by examination or any other reasonable means'. He and Sir John Simon agreed, after considerable argument with the French about the wording, to support the French resolution at Geneva. But they evidently still hoped for an arms convention and air pact, and were ready to start talks with Germany about

a naval agreement (No. 682), although it had been considered wise not to announce this before the conference. And, unlike the French, they did not regard the restrictive terms of the German proposals of April 12 for the eastern pact (No. 715) as entirely without meaning. Amid all the complaints of German intransigence there survived in the Cabinet and Foreign Office a dwindling faith in the chances of a comprehensive agreement with Germany and a consequent détente in her relations, at least with the western powers.

In the compiling of this volume some use has been made of the private papers of Sir John Simon (F.O. 800/289-291) and Mr. (later Sir) Orme Sargent (F.O. 800/275), and I am indebted to Lady Phipps for permission to use four letters from the private correspondence between Sir Robert Vansittart and Sir Eric Phipps.

Unless otherwise stated, references in footnotes to earlier volumes refer to volumes in the Second Series of these documents. The conditions under which the Editors accepted the task of producing this Collection, namely, access to all papers in the Foreign Office archives and freedom in the selection and arrangement of documents, continue to be fulfilled. I should like to thank Mr. C. J. Child, O.B.E., the former Foreign Office Librarian, and his successor Mr. B. Cheeseman, O.B.E., Librarian of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and their staff for all necessary facilities. And I must thank Miss I. Bains, M.A., for her indispensable help at every stage in the preparation of this volume.

*June 1971*

W. N. MEDLICOTT



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>B.F.S.P.</i>	<i>British and Foreign State Papers</i> (London).
<i>Cmd.</i>	Command Paper (London).
<i>D.D.B.</i>	<i>Documents Diplomatiques Belges 1920-1940</i> (Brussels).
<i>D.G.F.P.</i>	<i>Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945, Series C</i> (1933-37) (London).
<i>F.R.U.S.</i>	<i>Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States</i> (Washington).
<i>Facing the Dictators</i>	The Earl of Avon, <i>The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators</i> (London, 1962).
<i>H.C. Deb. 5 s.</i>	<i>Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Official Report, 5th Series,</i> House of Commons (London).
<i>H.L. Deb. 5 s.</i>	<i>Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Official Report, 5th Series,</i> House of Lords (London).
<i>L.N.O.J.</i>	<i>League of Nations Official Journal</i> (Geneva).
<i>L.N.O.J., S.S.</i>	<i>League of Nations Official Journal, Special Supplement</i> (Geneva).
<i>The Speeches of Adolf Hitler</i>	<i>The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, April 1922-August 1939,</i> edited by Norman H. Baynes, 2 vols (London, 1942).

An asterisk following the file number of a document indicates that the text has been taken from Confidential Print.



# CHAPTER SUMMARIES

## CHAPTER I

### Questions of Security and Rearmament: proposed Eastern Pact, Austria, Saar Territory

August 5–October 30, 1934

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
	1934		
1 MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 226	Aug. 5	Reports critical attitude of Signor Suvich, Italian Under-Secretary of State, towards recent developments in Germany.	1
2 VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 108	Aug. 6	Reports M. Litvinov's statement that he would be content with Franco-Soviet pact if E. pact of mutual assistance did not materialise.	2
3 MR. CAMPBELL Paris	Aug. 6	Letter to Mr. Wigram, in reply to Vol. VI, No. 564, relating to M. Léger's assessment of Polish objections to the proposed E. pact.	2
4 MR. AVELING Warsaw Tel. No. 47	Aug. 8	States that Polish Govt.'s attitude towards proposed E. pact unlikely to be declared before end of August.	3
5 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 175 Saving	Aug. 8	Gives own views on situation in Germany following death of President Hindenberg.	4
6 MR. CAMPBELL Paris	Aug. 8	Further letter to Mr. Wigram relating to Poland's attitude towards the proposed E. pact: summarizes objections to Roumanian participation in the pact.	5
7 SIR P. LORAINÉ Constantinople Tel. No. 18 Saving	Aug. 9	Reports action taken in response to Mustafa Kemal's request on June 18 for an assurance of H.M.G.'s friendship with Turkey.	7
8 MR. NEWTON Berlin Tel. No. 226	Aug. 10	Informs of signature on Aug. 10 of Anglo-German exchange agreement for commercial payments.	8
9 TO SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 72 Saving	Aug. 10	Outlines H.M.G.'s approach to Austrian problem and to joint action by U.K., France, and Italy: instructs to enquire whether French Government agree with appreciation of Austrian situation in Vol. VI, No. 563, and with proposed procedure.	9
10 SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. No. 23 Saving	Aug. 10	Reports conversation with Baron von Berger-Waldenegg, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who explained Austrian Govt.'s attitude towards Germany and Herr von Papen's mission.	10
11 SIR P. LORAINÉ Constantinople Tel. No. 19 Saving	Aug. 10	Refers to No. 7: reports M.F.A.'s gratification at H.M.G.'s message and Turkish Govt.'s attitude towards proposed E. pact.	11

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
12	MR. KNATCHBULL- HUGESSEN Riga No. 348	Aug. 10	According to press reports, Lithuanian and U.S.S.R. Govts. in close accord on all questions of foreign policy: Lithuania expects to take part in drafting E. pact.	12
13	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 98	Aug. 11	Refers to No. 9: French Govt.'s request for H.M.G.'s approval of instructions (see No. 14) suggested for despatch to French and British representatives at Rome.	13
14	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 99	Aug. 11	Text of instructions, mentioned in No. 13, to enquire whether Italian Govt. favoured joint Anglo-French-Italian approach to Austrian Govt. on need for more conciliatory attitude towards certain anti-Nazi elements.	14
15	MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 231	Aug. 11	Reports conversation with Signor Suvich on Italian Govt.'s attitude towards Austria and violence of Italian press articles against Yugoslavia.	14
16	MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 232	Aug. 11	Refers to No. 15 and reports conversation relating to E. pact: Italian Govt. in favour of progress being made without unnecessary delay.	15
17	MR. CARR Foreign Office	Aug. 11	Record of conversation with M. Cambon, French Chargé d'Affaires, relating to importance of H.M.G. and French Govt. maintaining an interest in Austrian independence.	16
18	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 110	Aug. 13	Reports on possibility of Soviet-German rapprochement if proposals for E. pact come to nothing.	17
19	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 100	Aug. 13	Refers to No. 14 and requests approval of revised draft instructions to French Chargé d'Affaires at Rome.	18
20	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 101	Aug. 13	Text of draft instructions mentioned in No. 19. <i>Note 2.</i> Sir J. Simon's instructions of Aug. 13 to Mr. Murray to make démarche to Signor Suvich on lines similar to those in Paris tel. No. 101.	18
21	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 232 Saving	Aug. 13	Czechoslovak Govt.'s reported reasons for not supporting Roumanian Govt.'s application to participate in E. pact (cf. No. 6).	19
22	MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 236	Aug. 14	Refers to No. 9: suggests alternative procedure on Austrian question. <i>Note 3.</i> Signor Mussolini to meet Dr. Schuschnigg on Aug. 21.	20
23	TO MR. NEWTON Berlin Tel. No. 163	Aug. 14	Instructions to present to German Govt. a note relating to commercial debts on lines of draft in No. 24 and to indicate H.M.G.'s willingness to receive representative of German Govt. to discuss liquidation of the debts.	20
24	TO MR. NEWTON Berlin Tel. No. 164	Aug. 14	Text of draft mentioned in No. 23.	21

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
<b>25</b> MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 238	Aug. 14	Has carried out instructions in No. 20, note 2: reports Signor Suvich's view that Signor Mussolini would prefer himself to advise Dr. Schuschnigg (see No. 22, note 3) on the firm but conciliatory policy to be followed.	22
<b>26</b> SIR E. OVEY Brussels No. 445	Aug. 14	Reports press article on alleged change in H.M.G.'s policy towards British responsibilities on the continent.	23
<b>27</b> MR. NEWTON Berlin Tel. No. 229	Aug. 15	Has carried out instructions in No. 23: refers to Dr. Dieckhoff's complaint of hostility of British press and his own reply.	25
<b>28</b> TO MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 261	Aug. 16	Comments on No. 25: suggests there may be fundamental difference between views of H.M.G. and Italian Govt. on position of Heimwehr in Austria: essential to know exactly what advice Signor Mussolini contemplates giving to Dr. Schuschnigg: would agree to Signor Mussolini making first communication and to its being repeated by British and French Ministers in Austria.	25
<b>29</b> MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 243	Aug. 17	Refers to No. 28: French colleague has been instructed to tell Italian Govt. of his Govt.'s determination not to create impression of taking sides in Austrian party politics.	26
<b>30</b> SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 233 Saving	Aug. 17	Reports M. Léger's views on Poland's delaying tactics towards the proposed E. pact: thinks French Govt. will continue to exert pressure to overcome Polish objections.	27
<b>31</b> SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 234 Saving	Aug. 17	Reports M. Léger's fears that agreement on advice to be tendered to Austrian Govt. by U.K., France, and Italy will not be reached before Dr. Schuschnigg's visit to Italy: such unity desirable to enable French Govt. to restrain Czechoslovak and Yugoslav Govts.	28
<b>32</b> MR. G. JEBB Rome	Aug. 17	Note on conversation with Signor Quaroni on proposed E. pact in the light of German and Polish opposition, and probable French and Soviet reactions.	28
<b>33</b> TO MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 264	Aug. 18	Instructions to ask Signor Suvich exactly in what sense Signor Mussolini will speak to Dr. Schuschnigg.	29
<b>34</b> MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 245	Aug. 18	Refers to No. 25: Signor Mussolini has stated his inability to intervene in Austrian internal affairs with advice or with joint Anglo-French-Italian representations at Vienna.	30
<b>35</b> MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 246	Aug. 18	Refers to No. 34: suggests alternative procedures and asks for instructions.	30

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
36 MR. MURRAY Rome No. 742	Aug. 18	Transmits translation of Signor Mussolini's reply of Aug. 16 to Sir J. Simon's letter of July 31 on Austrian affairs (Vol. VI, No. 546).	31
37 SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. No. 105	Aug. 19	Stresses need for complete agreement between British, French, and Italian Govts. in proffering advice to Austria.	32
38 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 129	Aug. 19	Comments on Signor Mussolini's reply in No. 34 and possible alternative courses: instructs to consult French Govt. urgently.	32
39 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 102	Aug. 20	Reports French Govt.'s preference for first alternative in No. 38, i.e. Signor Mussolini's remarks to Dr. Schuschnigg to be confirmed, at Vienna, by British and French Ministers.	33
40 MR. NEWTON Berlin No. 998	Aug. 20	Transmits record by Col. Thorne, H.M. Military Attaché at Berlin, of comments by a senior Reichswehrministerium officer on, in particular, the pace of German air rearmament and position of Gen. Göring.	34
41 MR. NEWTON Berlin	Aug. 21	Letter to Mr. Sargent reporting Herr Dieckhoff's views on German Govt.'s expected attitude towards proposed E. pact.	35
42 MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 33 Saving	Aug. 22	Comments on official communiqué issued on Aug. 21 after meeting at Florence between Signor Mussolini and Dr. Schuschnigg.	36
43 MR. MURRAY Rome No. 745	Aug. 22	Reports action taken regarding language desired to be held by Signor Mussolini to Dr. Schuschnigg on Aug. 21.	37
44 MR. NEWTON Berlin	Aug. 22	Letter to Mr. Baxter emphasising importance of doing nothing to jeopardise Anglo-German relations and contacts.	38
45 MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 252	Aug. 23	Reports alleged interview between Dr. Schuschnigg and representative of <i>Messaggero</i> on restoration of property to Habsburgs and maintenance of Austrian independence.	39
46 MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 254	Aug. 23	Reports further details on meeting between Signor Mussolini and Dr. Schuschnigg as given to him by Signor Quaroni.	40
47 MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 255	Aug. 23	Continuation of No. 46: Austrian problem now considered to be mainly one of finance.	41
48 SIR W. SELBY Vienna No. 173	Aug. 23	Examines certain prominent causes of Austria's difficulties, namely, the armed forces, economic situation, and tariff preferences.	42
49 MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 258	Aug. 24	French Ambassador has stated his Govt.'s satisfaction on the whole with Italian Govt.'s handling of Austrian situation: an Austrian colleague has given further particulars of the meeting at Florence.	46



	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
50	To Mr. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 79 Saving	Aug. 24	Refers to 'vague and unsatisfactory' information in Nos. 46 and 47: instructions to ask French Govt. whether they concur in awaiting more detailed information on Signor Mussolini's advice to Dr. Schuschnigg before making representations at Vienna.	47
51	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 104	Aug. 25	Refers to No. 50: French Govt. also seeking more information but consider some action at Vienna to be necessary.	47
52	MR. CAMPBELL Paris	Aug. 25	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart suggesting pressure on Poles to give favourable answer to French Govt. concerning proposed E. pact.	48
53	To Mr. AVELING Warsaw Tel. No. 61	Aug. 28	Informs that Polish Chargé d'Affaires was told on Aug. 27 of H.M.G.'s hope of receiving soon some indication of a favourable reply being prepared to the proposed E. pact proposals.	49
54	MR. SPEAIGHT Foreign Office	Aug. 28	Lists six conditions on which German Govt. would be prepared to join the proposed E. pact, according to information received by Lithuanian Govt.	49
55	MR. AVELING Warsaw No. 365	Aug. 28	Reports official denials in Warsaw of report of Polish-German commercial negotiations: comments on Marshal Pilsudski's alleged annoyance at press treatment of Franco-Polish relations.	50
56	SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. No. 108	Aug. 29	Reports conversation with M.F.A. on (a) meeting between Signor Mussolini and Dr. Schuschnigg, (b) questions to be raised by Austria at next League of Nations meeting, (c) alleged attitude of Yugoslav authorities.	51
57	MR. NEWTON Berlin Tel. No. 179 Saving	Aug. 29	Reports Lithuanian Minister's views on concerted action between German and Polish Govts. in replies to be given to E. pact proposals.	52
58	SIR H. MONTGOMERY The Hague No. 311	Aug. 29	Comments on question of Netherlands' neutrality and importance of preserving their tacit reliance on British aid in case of need.	53
59	MR. NEWTON Berlin	Aug. 29	Letter to Mr. Carr discussing Herr von Papen's appointment at Vienna; cf. Vol. VI, No. 550.	55
60	To Mr. NEWTON Berlin Tel. No. 31 Saving	Aug. 30	Refers to Nos. 23, 24, and 27 and instructs to press German Govt. for reply on commercial debt question: outlines arguments to be used.	56
61	MR. NEWTON Berlin Tel. No. 240	Aug. 31	Refers to No. 60 and explains why he is deferring action on it.	57
62	To Mr. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 275	Aug. 31	Considers moment opportune for Anglo-French support in Vienna of Signor Mussolini's representations to the Austrian Govt.: instructs to ascertain precisely what Signor Mussolini did say.	58

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
63	TO MR. MURRAY Rome No. 769	Aug. 31	Records Sir R. Vansittart's personal reply on Aug. 27 to enquiry by Italian Chargé d'Affaires concerning possible substitution of consultative pact for the proposed E. pact of mutual assistance.	59
64	SIR E. OVEY Brussels No. 464	Aug. 31	Reports interview with M.F.A. who emphasized importance to Belgium of a definite Anglo-Belgian understanding.	60
65	SIR W. SELBY Vienna	Aug. 31	Letter to Sir J. Simon at Geneva expressing hope of interview there between Sir J. Simon and Austrian Chancellor and M.F.A.: suggests Sir O. Niemeyer be consulted on Austrian financial position.	61
66	TO MR. NEWTON Berlin Tel. No. 171	Sept. 1	Refers to No. 61 and instructs on procedure to follow. <i>Note 2.</i> German Govt.'s reply of Sept. 4 to British note of Aug. 15 relating to commercial debts (see No. 23).	62
67	MR. PALAIRET Bucharest Tel. No. 89	Sept. 1	Reports conversation with M. Radulescu on Roumanian Govt.'s acceptance of Polish proposal that she should participate in proposed E. pact.	63
68	MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 267	Sept. 1	Refers to No. 62: considers H.M.G. and French Govt. should forthwith support counsels of moderation alleged to have been given by Signor Mussolini to Dr. Schuschnigg.	63
69	MR. MURRAY Rome	Sept. 1	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart discussing attitude of Signor Mussolini and Italian Foreign Office towards recent British representations concerning Austria.	64
70	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 238 Saving	Sept. 2	Discusses French Govt.'s attitude towards Austrian question.	65
71	TO MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 88 Saving	Sept. 3	Suggests action to be taken by French and British Ministers at Vienna, and requests views of French Govt.	66
72	SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. No. 113	Sept. 4	Refers to No. 71: submits that any advice to Dr. Schuschnigg would be more effective if made by Sir J. Simon and M. Barthou at Geneva.	67
73	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 105	Sept. 4	Reports French Govt.'s reply to No. 71: French Minister being instructed to act in conjunction with Sir W. Selby.	67
74	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 106	Sept. 4	Refers to No. 70: French Govt. unwilling to take initiative in securing for Austria a general guarantee of her integrity and financial assistance.	68
75	FOREIGN OFFICE	undated	Memo. on the Saar question summarizing, and commenting on, recent developments. <i>Note 16.</i> French aide-mémoire on the Saar of Aug. 31, 1934.	68
76	TO SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. No. 70	Sept. 5	Refers to Nos. 72 and 73: instructs to act with French colleague on lines agreed by French Govt.	74

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77 FOREIGN OFFICE	Sept. 5	Memo. on the proposal of the Saar Governing Commission to recruit an international police force for the Saar.	74
78 MR. MACK Prague Tel. No. 6 Saving	Sept. 6	Reports official announcement of meeting at Marienbad on Sept. 3 between M. Litvinov and Dr. Benes in connection with proposed E. pact and forthcoming League meeting.	77
79 MR. KNOX Saarbrücken	Sept. 6	Letter to Mr. Sargent reporting conversation with Herr von Papen relating to (a) French memo. of Aug. 31, (b) possibility of decision by plebiscite in favour of retention of <i>status quo</i> , (c) position of Herr Goebbels and strength of Reichswehr.	77
80 SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. No. 116	Sept. 7	Refers to No. 76 and reports interview with Dr. Schuschnigg on Sept. 7: Austrian Govt.'s need for protection by Powers from threat of attack from without.	79
81 MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Sept. 7	Note on conversation on Sept. 6 with Prince Otto von Bismarck relating to German Govt.'s opposition to recruitment of extra police for Saar territory from foreign countries or local communists.	80
82 MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 43 L.N. Saving	Sept. 8	Mr. Eden's report of meeting of League of Nations Council on Sept. 8 when resolution was adopted to invite Committee of Three to examine certain new problems relating to Saar Plebiscite and to report to Council.	81
83 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 189 Saving	Sept. 10	Considers H.M.G. should accept German Govt.'s offer to negotiate on application of new <i>devisen régime</i> to Anglo-German trade. <i>Note 2.</i> Sir F. Leith-Ross and Mr. T. St. Quintin Hill to begin discussions with Germans in Berlin on Sept. 19.	82
84 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 94 Saving	Sept. 11	Instructions to enquire orally as to French Govt.'s reactions to German memo. of Sept. 8 (see No. 85) and future intentions.	83
85 To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1018	Sept. 11	Informs of communication by German Chargé d'Affaires on Sept. 10 of memo. of Sept. 8 regarding Govt.'s attitude to proposals for an E. pact of mutual guarantee.	83
86 To SIR J. SIMON Geneva	Sept. 11	Letter from Sir R. Vansittart suggesting Dr. Schuschnigg be told of unfortunate impression given by Govt.'s attitude towards Socialists and <i>Reichspost</i> articles attacking Yugoslavia.	84
87 MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 45 L.N. Saving	Sept. 12	Sir J. Simon's account of his conversation with Dr. Schuschnigg and M. Berger-Waldenegg on Sept. 12: discussion of Austria's general situation and her proposal for a security pact.	85
88 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 247 Saving	Sept. 12	Reports that press comments on German memo. of Sept. 8 (see No. 85) describe reply as definite refusal: opinion as to next step is divided.	87

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89	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 248 Saving	Sept. 12	Refers to No. 84: French Govt. unlikely to reply to German memo. until Polish reply on proposed E. pact is received.	88
90	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 190 Saving	Sept. 12	Reports press comments on German memo. of Sept. 8 (see No. 85).	89
91	To MR. STRANG Geneva	Sept. 12	Letter from Mr. Perowne commenting adversely on Plebiscite Commission's action in complaining about telegram sent last July by Bishops of Treves and Speyer to late President of German Reich: points out dangers of preventing all electioneering in Saar plebiscite.	90
92	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 71 L.N.	Sept. 14	Telegram from Sir J. Simon referring to No. 87: has received draft of proposed pact: views of M. Massigli.	91
93	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 50 L.N. Saving	Sept. 15	Mr. Eden's account of conversation with M. Hornbostel of Austrian delegation who suggested amendments to draft in No. 92: states attitude he intends to maintain towards any fresh declaration about Austria.	91
94	To SIR E. OVEY Brussels No. 509	Sept. 15	Sir J. Simon's account of his conversations at Geneva with M. Jaspar who accordingly decides not to visit London at present.	92
95	MR. ROBERTS Paris	Sept. 15	Letter to Mr. Seymour referring to No. 89 and enclosing copy of M. Léger's note of Sept. 13 to M. Barthou containing his immediate reactions to German memo. of Sept. 8 (No. 85).	93
96	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 53 L.N. Saving	Sept. 17	Mr. Eden's report of Mr. Carr's conversations on Austrian question with French and Italian representatives: reasons for not accepting Italian draft pact: differences between France and Italy on submission of question to League of Nations and on position of Yugoslavia: restatement of H.M.G.'s attitude.	97
97	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 75 L.N.	Sept. 18	Mr. Eden's report of his conversations with Baron Aloisi and M. Barthou on Italian draft consultative pact in respect of Austria and attitude towards Yugoslavia: requests assurance that attitude adopted is correct.	99
98	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 76 L.N.	Sept. 19	Mr. Eden reports his non-committal attitude towards draft Council resolution regarding Austria submitted by French delegation and requests approval of attitude.	100
99	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 195 Saving	Sept. 19	Reports conversation with U.S. Ambassador who was perturbed at alleged German warlike preparations and intentions: considers Mr. Dodds takes too pessimistic a view of near future.	101
100	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1144	Sept. 19	Transmits memo. by Vice-Consul Phillips on certain military re-organization and related activities in Munich area.	102

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<b>101</b> To MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 81 L.N.	Sept. 20	Message for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart referring to Nos. 93, 96-98 and approving attitude taken: considers all Austria's neighbours, except Switzerland, should be consulted on terms of proposed pact: hints at possibility of alternative British proposal: suggests use of delaying tactics until Cabinet decision known.	103
<b>102</b> To SIR W. SELBY Vienna	Sept. 20	Letter from Sir R. Vansittart continuing earlier exchanges and examining divergent views as to developments in Austria and means of carrying out H.M.G.'s policy there.	105
<b>103</b> MR. EDEN Geneva	Sept. 21	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart enclosing copy of letter to Sir J. Simon and enquiring as to possibility of securing personal body-guard for Mr. Knox. <i>Encl.</i> Letter to Sir J. Simon on problem of policing the Saar during the plebiscite.	109 110
<b>104</b> MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 78 L.N.	Sept. 23	Message for Sir R. Vansittart from Mr. Eden, referring to No. 101 and reporting conversation with M. Massigli and Baron Aloisi on H.M.G.'s attitude to proposed Austrian pact.	111
<b>105</b> MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 81 L.N.	Sept. 24	Mr. Eden's appreciation of the Austrian question: favours delay until Franco-Italian relations become clearer.	113
<b>106</b> MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 80 L.N.	Sept. 24	Mr. Eden's report of his conversation with M. Barthou and Baron Aloisi on question of Austria: agreement reached that terms of a project should be evolved by representatives of France, Italy, and Austria: participation of a British representative declined by Mr. Eden.	113
<b>107</b> MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 82 L.N.	Sept. 24	Mr. Eden's appreciation of M. Barthou's position vis-à-vis Baron Aloisi who is pressing him to follow Italian lead in Central Europe.	114
<b>108</b> FOREIGN OFFICE	Sept. 24	Extract from a memo. by Sir J. Simon examining desirability of British participation with France and Italy in a consultative pact relating to Austria.	115
<b>109</b> MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 86 L.N.	Sept. 25	Mr. Eden reports conversation with M. Massigli on text of new French draft declaration concerning Austria and Italy's reasons for rejecting it.	117
<b>110</b> MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 87 L.N.	Sept. 25	Transmits text of French draft agreement referred to in No. 109.	118
<b>111</b> MR. CHARLES Moscow No. 469	Sept. 25	Reports exchange of notes in Moscow on Sept. 10 guaranteeing validity of existing Polish-Soviet agreements, and Polish Chargé d'Affaires' explanation of Poland's reluctant attitude towards joining proposed E. pact.	119

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112	SIR N. HENDERSON Belgrade No. 157	Sept. 25	Reports audience with King Alexander: comments on Yugoslavia's attitude towards Austrian refugees (cf. No. 86), and her tendency to gravitate towards Germany as form of reinsurance against Italy.	120
113	To MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 88 L.N.	Sept. 26	Message for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart explaining that decision in No. 114 was taken in light of Nos. 104-7 and before receipt of Nos. 109 and 110.	122
114	To MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 89 L.N.	Sept. 26	Transmits Cabinet decision of Sept. 25 on attitude to be taken on Austrian question: no new declaration desirable at present.	122
115	To MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 90 L.N.	Sept. 26	Message for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart transmitting Sir J. Simon's instructions in view of decisions in No. 114.	123
116	To MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 91 L.N.	Sept. 26	Message for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart informing him of suspected pre-arranged Italo-Austrian strategic plan.	124
117	To SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 303	Sept. 26	Refers to No. 115: instructs to speak to Signor Mussolini deprecating rumoured isolated action by Italian Govt. to secure bilateral Austro-Italian agreement.	124
118	To MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 93 L.N.	Sept. 26	Refers to Nos. 109 and 110: instructs on attitude to take if Italian guarantee pact (see No. 96) were revived.	125
119	MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Sept. 26	Minute recording telephone request from British delegation at Geneva for immediate instructions on proposal in Nos. 109 and 110: original Italian draft no longer under consideration: asks whether permission authorized to accept text in No. 87 minus last two paragraphs.	125
120	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1160	Sept. 26	Detailed review of situation in Germany (economic, political, ecclesiastical) and of Herr Hitler's position.	126
121	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 60 L.N. Saving	Sept. 27	Mr. Eden reports conversation with M. Litvinov relating to proposed E. pact, Soviet Russia's entry into the League, Anglo-Soviet relations, and dangers of Italo-Yugoslav tension. <i>Note 2.</i> Polish Govt.'s reply of Sept. 27 to French Govt.'s proposals relating to an E. pact communicated to U.K. delegation at Geneva on Sept. 28.	132
122	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 61 L.N. Saving	Sept. 27	Mr. Eden's report of meeting of League of Nations Council on Sept. 27 to receive report of Committee of Three (cf. No. 82) on Saar plebiscite.	134
123	FOREIGN OFFICE	Sept. 27	Note on desirability of H.M.G. urging Germany to make an offer of a non-aggression pact to Holland.	135
124	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 205 Saving	Sept. 28	Reports derisive press comments on Anglo-French-Italian declaration of Sept. 27 regarding Austria. <i>Note 1.</i> Communiqué issued Sept. 27 giving text of Anglo-French-Italian declaration.	136

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<b>125</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1170 E	Sept. 28	Transmits record by Sir F. Leith-Ross of his conversation with Baron von Neurath on Sept. 25 (cf. No. 83, note 2).	137
<b>126</b> SIR W. SELBY Vienna No. 191	Sept. 29	Reports on press reaction to Anglo-French-Italian declaration of Sept. 27 and significance of omission from Dr. Schuschnigg's speech of Sept. 27 of any mention of Austro-Italian relations: discusses other political developments.	140
<b>127</b> SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 260 Saving	Oct. 1	Reports M.F.A.'s view that both the German and the Polish replies concerning proposed Eastern pact (see No. 85 and No. 121, note 2) left open the possibility of further discussion.	142
<b>128</b> SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 261 Saving	Oct. 1	Reports M.F.A.'s views on situation in the Saar: serious disorders during plebiscite not considered likely: legal position relating to use of French troops explained.	143
<b>129</b> TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 309	Oct. 2	Instructions to inform Signor Mussolini of H.M.G.'s interpretation of declarations of Feb. 17 and Sept. 27 as contemplating that signatories will keep in touch on Austrian situation and take no action without consulting one another.	143
<b>130</b> MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 264 Saving	Oct. 4	Has communicated, as instructed, H.M.G.'s interpretation of declaration of Sept. 27 (cf. No. 129): similar instructions being sent to French Ambassador at Rome.	144
<b>131</b> TO MR. CAMPBELL Paris	Oct. 5	Letter from Mr. Sargent enclosing copy of No. 103, enclosure, and suggesting steps to ascertain exact arrangements for sending French troops into the Saar if needed.	144
<b>132</b> SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 303	Oct. 7	Refers to Nos. 129 and 130 and suggests alternative procedure to avoid arousing Italian Govt.'s resentment by identic and simultaneous communication from H.M.G. and French Govt. on policy towards Austria. <i>Note 4.</i> Suggested procedure approved.	145
<b>133</b> SIR N. HENDERSON Belgrade	Oct. 8	Letter to Mr. Carr commenting on Franco-Yugoslav coolness and on value of Yugoslav friendship to Great Britain.	146
<b>134</b> MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Oct. 9	Record of conversation with M. Poliakoff, diplomatic correspondent of <i>The Times</i> , on French Govt.'s anticipation of early renunciation by German Govt. of Part V of Treaty of Versailles. <i>Note 5.</i> Views of Sir E. Phipps and Mr. Campbell on M. Poliakoff's statement requested by Foreign Office.	147
<b>135</b> TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 878	Oct. 9	Sir J. Simon's account of a conversation with Signor Grandi on importance of putting an end to Italo-Yugoslav press polemics, and on Austrian situation.	148

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<b>136</b> To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Oct. 11	Letter from Mr. Sargent relating to Germany's illegal rearmament, and suggesting tacit acquiescence in violation of Part V of Treaty of Versailles be given in intercourse between H.M. Service Attachés at Berlin and German opposite numbers in London.	149
<b>137</b> MR. CAMPBELL Paris	Oct. 12	Letter to Mr. Sargent informing him of enquiries made as to readiness of French troops to move into the Saar (see No. 131); reasons for French Govt.'s reluctance to make full-scale preparations. <i>Note 4.</i> Assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and M. Barthou at Marseilles on Oct. 9.	151
<b>138</b> MR. KNOX Saarbrücken	Oct. 15	Letter to Mr. Sargent setting out the position, as far as known to him, of French Govt.'s plans to provide troops for the Saar; discusses possible causes of disturbance and advantages of employing police reinforcements of varied nationalities.	152
<b>139</b> SIR W. SELBY Vienna No. 199	Oct. 16	Reports on unsettled situation in Austria: suggests moment is appropriate for Italian Govt. to secure from German Govt. recognition of Austrian independence.	154
<b>140</b> To SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 331	Oct. 17	Expresses satisfaction with Signor Mussolini's assurance that Italy will not conclude political agreement about Austria with third parties without prior consultation with H.M.G. and French Govt.: refers to Nos. 115, 117, and 135, and instructs to obtain confirmation that no isolated action would be taken to secure Italo-Austrian bilateral agreement.	157
<b>141</b> To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1171	Oct. 18	Sir J. Simon's account of his conversation relating to Saar plebiscite with Herr von Hoesch who gave German Govt.'s view of French memo. of Aug. 31: H.M.G.'s impartial attitude explained.	157
<b>142</b> MR. CAMPBELL Paris	Oct. 18	Letter to Mr. Sargent referring to No. 137 and reporting interview between Military Attaché and General Loiseau of French General Staff on movements of troops into the Saar: enquires whether British serving army officers could be authorised to volunteer to join plebiscite police force.	159
<b>143</b> SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 321	Oct. 19	Explains difficulties in way of carrying out instructions in No. 140 and suggests alternative procedure.	160
<b>144</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1259	Oct. 19	Gives own views and those of Military Attaché on M. Poliakoff's statement in No. 134: considers German Govt. reluctant to cause avoidable international complications at the moment.	161



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<b>145</b> SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 285 Saving	Oct. 20	Reports impression gained from interview with M. Léger that policy developed by M. Barthou will be continued by his successor, M. Laval: no indication given as to Govt.'s attitude towards M. Benes' scheme for a general convention relating to Austria.	163
<b>146</b> SIR N. HENDERSON Belgrade Tel. No. 55	Oct. 21	Reports profound impression made by Sir J. Simon's speech on Oct. 19 on assassination of King Alexander, also by Gen. Göring's statement to the press on importance of a strong and powerful Yugoslavia.	164
<b>147</b> SIR N. HENDERSON Belgrade No. 180	Oct. 22	Comments on situation created by assassination of King Alexander, and aspects favourable to the Prince Regent.	164
<b>148</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1265	Oct. 23	Reports more prominence being given in German press to Saar plebiscite, especially to alleged interest of League of Nations in becoming third claimant to Saar territory.	166
<b>149</b> MR. CAMPBELL Paris No. 1648	Oct. 24	Transmits copy of despatch by Military Attaché recording views of French General Staff on certain aspects of German military and aerial rearmament.	168
<b>150</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Oct. 24	Letter to Mr. Sargent discussing alleged existence of a 'war party' in Herr Hitler's entourage and varying views as to when Germany will be ready for war.	170
<b>151</b> MR. CAMPBELL Paris	Oct. 24	Sends Mr. Sargent copy of letter questioning the need for any further decision by League of Nations regarding military aid. <i>Encl.</i> Letter of Oct. 22 from Mr. Knox to H.M. Military Attaché at Paris.	172
<b>152</b> MR. KNOX Saarbrücken	Oct. 25	Letter to Mr. Sargent relating to the recruitment of officers and financing of the international plebiscite police force.	174
<b>153</b> FOREIGN OFFICE	Oct. 27	Memo. on Anglo-German debt and exchange negotiations since signature of Anglo-German transfer agreement on July 4, 1934.	175
<b>154</b> FOREIGN OFFICE	Oct. 30	Memo. on German debt negotiations leading to signature in Berlin on Nov. 1 of Anglo-German trade and financial agreement printed in Cmd. 4726.	178

## CHAPTER II

### Saar Plebiscite: German Rearmament

#### October 30, 1934-January 15, 1935

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156 MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 294 Saving	Oct. 30	Gives own appreciation of policy and personal characteristics of M. Laval.	182
157 To MR. CAMPBELL Paris No. 1647	Oct. 30	Sir J. Simon's account of conversation with M. Corbin on attitude of French Govt. to some current problems, in particular, readiness of French troops to restore order in Saar if needed, and importance of improving Franco-Italian relations.	184
158 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 226 Saving	Oct. 31	Reports gist of semi-official communiqué on anxiety aroused in Germany and the Saar by press reports that French troops are to be placed at disposal of Saar Governing Commission if required.	185
159 MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Oct. 31	Memo. on German rearmament and Herr Hitler's policy of aggression, as distinct from an aggressive war.	186
160 MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 297 Saving	Nov. 1	Reports conversation with M. Léger on the Austrian problem (cf. No. 155) and difficulties in way of Franco-Italian agreement.	187
161 MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 299 Saving	Nov. 1	Refers to Nos. 155 and 160; explains that plans prepared by General Staff for use of French troops in Saar not yet approved by Govt.: formal mandate from League and token representation of other nations may be requested.	188
162 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 228 Saving	Nov. 1	Reports French Ambassador's fears as to danger of German press campaign against use of French troops in the Saar, cf. No. 158.	188
163 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 229 Saving	Nov. 2	Reports further vigorous press comments against French troops being sent to Saar.	190
164 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 230 Saving	Nov. 2	Refers to No. 163: reports officially-expressed fears of a provoked incident leading to French invasion: German Saar expert to meet Baron Aloisi's sub-committee: S.A. and S.S. leaders restrained from provocative action.	191
165 SIR P. LORAINÉ Angora Tel. No. 37 Saving	Nov. 2	Reports conversation with Roumanian M.F.A. relating to (a) necessity for international co-operation to stop political assassinations, (b) attitude of signatories of Balkan Pact towards Bulgaria, (c) Poland's reply concerning proposed E. pact.	191
166 MR. WALTERS League of Nations Geneva	Nov. 2	Letter to Mr. Strang on present state of the Saar question and reasons for the absence of substantial progress.	192

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168	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1215	Nov. 5	Herr von Hoesch has expressed to Mr. Sargent German Govt.'s disagreement with French view of possibility of a further plebiscite in Saar, and their inability to agree to any restrictions being placed upon German sovereignty if voting were in Germany's favour.	194
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170	TO MR. CAMPBELL Paris No. 1669	Nov. 5	Sir J. Simon assured by M. Corbin that French troop dispositions on Saar border were purely precautionary, and that request for assistance by Saar Governing Commission must precede any use of an external force.	196
171	MR. CAMPBELL Paris No. 1696	Nov. 5	Reports M. Massigli's view that denunciation of Part V of Treaty of Versailles by German Govt. unlikely until after Saar plebiscite.	197
172	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 305 Saving	Nov. 6	Reports excellent impression made by Sir J. Simon's speech in House of Commons on Nov. 5 on maintenance of order in Saar territory.	198
173	MR. KNOX Saarbrücken	Nov. 6	Letter to Mr. Sargent explaining advantages of publication of report on activities of 'Deutsche Front': outburst in German press on subject of French troops has had good effect from Governing Commission's point of view.	198
174	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 340	Nov. 7	Reports refusal of German delegates to negotiate on Saar questions under threat of menace of entry of French troops into Saar, and their request that refugees from present German regime be expelled.	199
175	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 233 Saving	Nov. 7	Reports strong opposition of Baron von Neurath and Herr von Bülow to despatch of French troops to Saar, and former's suggestion that Switzerland be pressed to send troops and gendarmes if necessary.	199
176	MR. CAMPBELL Paris No. 1709	Nov. 7	Outlines views of M. Bargeton, Political Director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on French Govt.'s intention to re-open negotiations with Poland on proposed E. pact after Saar plebiscite.	200
177	MR. PALAIRET Bucharest No. 392	Nov. 8	Reports conversation with M. Titulescu who told him of decision taken at recent Conference of Balkan Pact powers regarding	201

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178 To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1249	Nov. 9	Sir J. Simon informed by Herr von Hoesch of German protest in Paris against attitude of French Govt. in relation to impending Saar plebiscite: encloses copy of note communicated by Herr von Hoesch.	202
179 MR. HADOW Vienna No. 221	Nov. 12	Refers to Nos. 126 and 139 and recapitulates certain aspects of situation in Austria: suggests moment may be opportune to secure German recognition of Austrian territorial integrity.	205
180 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 238 Saving	Nov. 13	Gives examples of rumours published in press relating to conclusion of Anglo-French-Belgian military and air agreement, and commenting unfavourably on speeches in England by General Smuts.	207
181 MR. WIGRAM Foreign Office	Nov. 13	Memo. on interview between Mr. Eden and Herr von Ribbentrop on Nov. 12 mainly concerning limitation of armaments: also statement of Sir J. Simon's interview with Herr von Ribbentrop on Nov. 13: no new fact emerged from either discussion.	207
182 To SIR E. OVEY Brussels No. 597	Nov. 13	Informs of conversation with Belgian Ambassador who expressed his Govt.'s anxiety about situation in Europe and possibility of sudden German assault, especially in view of reported presence of German troops in demilitarized zone.	209
183 To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 214	Nov. 14	Informs of statements made in House of Commons by Mr. Eden on Nov. 14 relating to interviews with Herr von Ribbentrop (cf. No. 181) and deprecating their being given undue political significance.	210
184 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 243 Saving	Nov. 14	Official circles disturbed by recent forecasts of outcome of Saar plebiscite: vigorous programme of pressure launched.	211
185 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 154	Nov. 15	Refers to No. 186 below and instructs to inform M.F.A. unofficially of communication to Baron Aloisi and to explain H.M.G.'s point of view on Saar plebiscite.	211
186 To SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 351	Nov. 15	Informs of H.M.G.'s view that only one plebiscite is contemplated in Treaty of Versailles: emphasizes need for League of Nations Council to maintain strict impartiality: discusses procedure relating to a system of minority protection. Instructs to convey H.M.G.'s views to Baron Aloisi.	211
187 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 314 Saving	Nov. 15	Report of Mr. Campbell's conversation with M. Léger who gave an account of recent interviews between M. Laval and Herr Koester, the German Ambassador at Paris, on the Saar plebiscite.	214

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189	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 124	Nov. 16	Reports M.F.A.'s remarks on advantages of large minority vote in Saar plebiscite, and French Govt.'s intention not to influence voters.	217
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192	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 349	Nov. 17	Refers to No. 143 and informs of letter received from Signor Suvich on importance attached by Italian Govt. to community of views and action in regard to Austrian problem.	219
193	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 350	Nov. 17	Transmits Baron Aloisi's request for Sir J. Simon's support of his suggestion for adjournment of League of Nations Council meeting for a week: completion of report on Saar financial matters delayed by German experts' lack of instructions.	220
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195	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tels. Nos. 248 and 249 Saving	Nov. 19	Refers to No. 182: reports on origin of alarmist information regarding S.A. troops in demilitarized zone, and Gen. von Reichenau's statement on Herr Hitler's reasons for respecting sanctity of zone.	221
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<b>224</b> To MR. CAMPBELL Paris No. 1826	Nov. 27	Informs of Sir J. Simon's conversation with M. Corbin regarding communication to Herr von Hoesch (see No. 222): no intention of linking this action with attitude towards Saar.	262
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<b>228</b> VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 160	Nov. 28	Discusses Franco-Soviet relations: considers better relations with Germany, as well as an understanding with France and Poland, would be welcomed: has no evidence that separate German-Soviet negotiations are being considered.	265
<b>229</b> To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 224	Nov. 28	Instructs to inform M.F.A. of revised number of German military machines to be mentioned in Mr. Baldwin's speech in House of Commons following Herr von Neurath's correction of H.M.G.'s previous estimate (cf. No. 216).	266
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235	SIR J. SIMON Foreign Office	Nov. 29	Detailed note on questions to be considered by H.M.G. in determining policy to be followed towards German rearmament in violation of Part V of Treaty of Versailles: certain tentative propositions put forward.	271
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239	MR. MURRAY Rome Tel. No. 377	Nov. 30	Explains position with regard to drafting of Committee of Three's report on Saar and reasons for hoping that Mr. Eden will be at Geneva on Dec. 4 when finishing touches will be put to it.	278
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247	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 1026	Dec. 3	Summarizes two press editorial comments on House of Commons debate on Nov. 28.	287
248	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 106 L.N.	Dec. 4	Message from Mr. Eden anticipating the view in Geneva that League Council measures in connection with Saar plebiscite cannot depend on Germany's legal consent.	288
249	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 109 L.N.	Dec. 4	Mr. Eden's account of conversation with Mr. Knox: despatch of international force still considered best method of avoiding disturbances in the Saar.	288
250	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 257 Saving	Dec. 4	Reports approval of whole German press of successful outcome of negotiations in Rome relating to questions of political, financial and economic character likely to arise in event of Saar Territory reverting to Germany after plebiscite.	289
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<b>268</b> MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 118 L.N.	Dec. 7	Mr. Eden transmits Baron Aloisi's suggestion that replies of the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland relating to troops for an international force (see No. 271 below) be sent to Secretary-General of League of Nations.	308

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272	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 121 L.N.	Dec. 7	Mr. Eden reports Mr. Knox's estimate of 3,000 for strength of international force and presumes H.M.G. will want to supply about 50 per cent.	310
273	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 392	Dec. 7	Instructions to thank Signor Mussolini for his prompt reply in No. 262, and to explain H.M.G.'s views as to a British Commander-in-Chief for the international force and an Italian chairman of new committee at Geneva.	310
274	TO MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 131 L.N.	Dec. 7	Refers to Nos. 270 and 273, and explains procedure that H.M.G. consider should be followed in connection with setting-up of new committee at Geneva.	311
275	MR. VEREKER Stockholm Tel. No. 24	Dec. 7	Reports reason for Swedish Govt.'s delay in reaching decision on sending contingent to international force for Saar.	312
276	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 387	Dec. 7	Refers to No. 273; reports Signor Mussolini's agreement to British commander for international force, and his hope of H.M. representative's support for Baron Aloisi as president of new committee.	313
277	TO MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 134 L.N.	Dec. 7	Sir J. Simon's reply to No. 264: appreciates point made by Mr. Eden; explains why instructions sent to The Hague, Stockholm, and Berne (cf. No. 271) were useful.	313
278	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 335 Saving	Dec. 7	Reports great satisfaction of press at decision to send international force to Saar and favourable reaction on reputation of the League, British prestige, and position of M. Laval.	314
279	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 261 Saving	Dec. 7	Transmits text of official communiqué forbidding all S.A. and S.S. men from entering Saar Territory and giving reasons for the order.	314
280	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 263 Saving	Dec. 7	Reports alleged increased optimism of Herr Hitler as to outcome of Saar plebiscite and his own prospects in general.	315

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
281	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 264 Saving	Dec. 7	Reports alleged view of Herr Hitler that House of Commons debate of Nov. 28 entitled Germany for all practical purposes to effectives and arms demanded last spring: figure of 1,000 to be used as spring-board to demand further 1,000 aeroplanes owing to advances made in Russia.	315
282	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 265 Saving	Dec. 7	Reports return of Herr von Ribbentrop 'with airs of a conqueror', and his own intention to discourage further interview between Herr Hitler and French ex-service men.	316
283	SIR W. SELBY Vienna No. 241	Dec. 7	Reports decision to entertain Herr von Papen, and a subsequent informal conversation with Herr von Papen and Mr. Messersmith.	316
284	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. Unnumbered	Dec. 8	Mr. Eden's report of League Council meetings on Dec. 8 concerning composition of international force for the Saar and procedure to be followed.	319
285	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 1050	Dec. 8	Reports Signor Suvich's reasons for fearing overwhelming plebiscite vote in Germany's favour and further German intervention in Austrian affairs.	320
286	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 80 L.N. Saving	Dec. 11	Mr. Eden reports adoption by League Council on Dec. 11 of Committee of Three's report relating to organization and functions of international force for the Saar, and subsequent action taken.	320
287	TO SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 170	Dec. 13	Instructions on message to give to M. Flandin relating to proposals for his official visit to London with M. Laval for discussion, in particular, of German rearmament.	321
288	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 138	Dec. 13	Explains why he has not yet acted on instructions in No. 287: reports interview on Dec. 13 with M. Laval who outlined his intended policy towards Austria, Italy, E. pact, and then, if successful, German rearmament: visit to London now would be inopportune.	322
289	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Dec. 13	Letter to Mr. Sargent telling him of Belgian Minister's anxiety about increasing German armament pretensions: gives figures of German claims.	323
290	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 395	Dec. 14	Reports conversation with Signor Mussolini who seemed pleased at H.M.G.'s invitation to M. Flandin (see No. 287), explained the impasse in Franco-Italian conversations, and expressed the view that only method of reducing German armaments now was by war.	324
291	TO SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 141 Saving	Dec. 14	Sir J. Simon refers to No. 288 and agrees with postponement of formal invitation to M. Flandin: suggests short informal talk	325

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
			with MM. Flandin and Laval when passing through Paris following week: emphasizes fundamental difference in approach to German rearmament of M. Laval and H.M.G.	
292	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 270 Saving	Dec. 14	Reports cool reception in the Saar of some British officers.	326
293	To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 232	Dec. 15	Refers to Nos. 242 and 281: instructions to leave German Govt. in no doubt that H.M.G. still consider disarmament clauses of Part V of Treaty of Versailles to be binding upon Germany: reasons for not making public statement to this effect in Parliament.	326
294	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 272 Saving	Dec. 16	Reports informal talk with Dr. Goebbels and Lord Rothermere concerning latter's press articles on the Saar and return of colonies to Germany.	327
295	SIR W. ERSKINE Warsaw No. 489	Dec. 16	Reports conversations with M. Beck and the French Ambassador at Warsaw on Poland's attitude towards proposed E. pact: ascribes it to Poland's desire not to compromise relations with Germany.	328
296	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 274 Saving	Dec. 17	Reports press comments on an incident in Saarbrücken involving Mr. Knox's special constables.	329
297	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1468	Dec. 17	Comments on figures of strength of Reichsheer and German air force given by H.M. Consul-General at Munich.	331
298	To SIR F. LEITH-ROSS Board of Trade	Dec. 17	Letter from Sir R. Vansittart expressing misgivings about proposed 'loan' by Bank of England to Germany and question of liquidation of frozen debts under Anglo-German Payments Agreement of Nov. 1, 1934.	332
299	SIR G. CLERK Paris	Dec. 17	Letter to Mr. Sargent discussing priorities in French foreign policy: considers no Govt. could at present survive an agreement legalising German rearmament without first providing for security: Franco-Soviet bilateral agreement likely if Germany and Poland refuse to enter E. pact.	333
300	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 341 Saving	Dec. 18	Reports indications in French press of conditions subject to which French Govt. might consider early resumption of disarmament discussions.	336
301	FOREIGN OFFICE	Dec. 18	Memo. on the Austrian question and attitude towards it of French, Italian, and German Govts.: suggests form of declaration of non-aggression and non-interference which might be proposed to Germany.	336
302	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 1471	Dec. 18	Explains why he embodied substance of No. 293 in a private letter to M.F.A.	338

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		<i>Encl. Letter of Dec. 17 from Sir E. Phipps to Baron von Neurath on continuing validity of Part V of Treaty of Versailles.</i>	339
303 MR. CHARLES MOSCOW	Dec. 18	Letter to Mr. Baxter concerning Soviet-German financial negotiations: German credits amounting to 200 million marks being negotiated but no question of a loan from Germany.	339
304 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 316	Dec. 19	Reports receipt of private letter from M.F.A. in reply to enclosure in No. 302.	340
305 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 277 Saving	Dec. 20	Suggests that in view of similarity of attitude towards German rearmament of H.M.G. and Belgian Govt. latter might influence French Govt. in favour of a limitation of armaments convention.	341
306 TO SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 1949	Dec. 20	Informs of conversation on Dec. 14 between M. Corbin and Sir R. Vansittart, who expressed his own views as to urgency of Anglo-French agreement on the German problem.	341
307 MR. NEWTON Berlin	Dec. 20	Letter to Mr. Baxter discussing the significance of Russo-German credit negotiations: Franco-Soviet commercial negotiations also rumoured.	344
308 MR. PEROWNE Foreign Office	Dec. 21	Memo. prepared for Sir J. Simon's information on Anglo-French policy towards the securing of a general settlement with Germany while initiative remained with H.M.G. and French Govt.	346
309 TO SIR E. OVEY Brussels No. 660	Dec. 21	Informs of conversation on Dec. 18 between Belgian Ambassador and Sir R. Vansittart on prospects of resumption of disarmament negotiations: latter repeated views in No. 306 with which Baron Cartier expressed agreement.	350
310 VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 169	Dec. 22	Reports conversation with M. Litvinov on Franco-Soviet protocol of Dec. 5 and prospects of E. pact.	351
311 ANGLO-FRENCH CONVERSATION Paris	Dec. 22	Record of informal Anglo-French discussion on plans for prompt official Anglo-French consultations regarding policy towards German rearmament: M. Laval's reasons for giving priority to Franco-Italian agreement on Austria: discussion on programme for forthcoming Anglo-French meeting and on arguments to be used by H.M.G. in Rome in aid of French proposals for multilateral declaration in support of Austrian integrity.	352
312 TO SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 1985	Dec. 28	Informs of conversation on Dec. 20 between M. Corbin and Sir R. Vansittart on advantages of securing a Franco-Italian agreement before the Saar plebiscite was held.	356

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
313	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 281 Saving	Dec. 29	Refers to No. 305: reports Belgian Minister's disappointment at his Govt.'s hostility towards an armament convention.	357
		1935		
314	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 5 Saving	Jan. 4	Reports Herr Hitler's occasional fits of nervousness about result of Saar plebiscite: gives reasons for spectacular gathering held in State Opera House on Jan. 3.	358
315	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 6 Saving	Jan. 4	Has heard confidentially about Jan. 3 gathering: rearmament policy accepted by the country but employment position and standard of living criticised.	358
316	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 3	Jan. 7	Transmits copy of Sir J. Simon's telegram to Sir E. Drummond instructing him to put to Signor Mussolini and M. Laval desirability of invitation to Germany to attend League of Nations discussions following Saar plebiscite: suggests procedure to follow.	359
317	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 4	Jan. 7	Reports M. Flandin's reaction to suggestion in No. 316: M. Laval is being consulted.	360
318	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 26	Jan. 8	Reports Signor Mussolini's preference for suggestion in No. 316 being put forward by Sir E. Phipps, with support of his Italian and French colleagues, rather than as joint démarche.	360
319	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 27	Jan. 8	M. Laval has promised to send answer to suggestion in No. 316 from Paris on Jan. 9: French Ambassador thinks M. Laval prefers to await result of plebiscite.	361
320	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 28	Jan. 8	Reports French Ambassador's views on M. Laval's attitude.	361
321	TO SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 7	Jan. 8	Instructions to inform French Govt. of Signor Mussolini's views in No. 318 and Sir J. Simon's strong disapproval of awaiting result of Saar plebiscite: explains more fully the suggestion to be made to German Govt.	362
322	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 6	Jan. 9	Has learnt that Herr von Hassell, German Ambassador at Rome, has told Signor Mussolini that Germany was prepared to resume disarmament discussions on basis of Italian draft of Jan. 31, 1934.	363
323	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 9	Jan. 9	Indicates terms of proposal to make to German Govt. as to their participation in League of Nations' discussions on the Saar: French and Italian Govts. approve.	363
324	SIR J. SIMON Foreign Office	Jan. 9	Record of conversation with Herr von Hoesch on desirability of shortest possible interval between announcement of result of Saar plebiscite and the carrying of it into effect.	364



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325	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 7	Jan. 10	Reports carrying out instructions in No. 323: Baron von Neurath's first reactions not favourable.	365
326	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 11	Jan. 10	Has heard from Baron von Neurath of Herr Hitler's decision that Germany cannot be present at League meeting on Saar as Council member but experts will be available: need for prompt decision stressed.	365
327	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. Nos. 5 and 6	Jan. 10	Reports grounds for M. Litvinov's anxiety as to scope of Franco-Italian proposal for Central European agreement (see No. 335 below) and possible effect on Russia's position.	366
328	MR. HARVEY Paris	Jan. 10	Letter to the Foreign Office enclosing text of disarmament protocol concluded at Rome between M. Laval and Signor Mussolini on Jan. 7.	367
329	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 15	Jan. 11	Has heard of German Govt.'s surprise at enquiry in No. 325 about their return to League Council for Saar discussion after Herr von Hoesch's reported statement to Mr. Sargent that such an enquiry could only lead to a refusal.	368
330	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 8 Saving	Jan. 11	Reports press comments on British démarche in Berlin inviting Germany to attend forthcoming Council on Saar.	369
331	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 2 L.N. Saving	Jan. 11	Sir J. Simon informs of conversation between Mr. Eden and M. Massigli on future course of disarmament negotiations in the light of German requirements.	369
332	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 48	Jan. 11	Herr von Hoesch on Jan. 9 communicated message asking that no decision on German armaments be taken at forthcoming League meeting without previous discussion with Germany.	371
333	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 7	Jan. 12	Refers to No. 327: M. Litvinov has expressed his annoyance to Austrian Minister at omission of U.S.S.R. from proposed Italian agreement.	372
334	SIR J. SIMON Geneva No. 1 L.N.	Jan. 12	Sir J. Simon's record of his conversation with Baron Aloisi about extension of mandate of Committee of Three to cover problems arising after the Saar plebiscite on Jan. 13: discussion of some of these problems.	372
335	SIR J. SIMON Geneva No. 6 L.N.	Jan. 12	Record of conversation between Sir J. Simon and M. Laval, concerning (a) the Franco-Italian agreements signed at Rome on Jan. 7; (b) attitude of U.S.S.R.; (c) forthcoming Anglo-French discussions in London.	374
336	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 16 Saving	Jan. 14	Reports press comments on proposal in <i>The Times</i> of Jan. 12 relating to recognition by ex-allies of German rearmament.	378

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337	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 13 L.N.	Jan. 15	Message from Mr. Eden informing of French Ministers' proposal to arrive in London on Jan. 31 and enquiring whether date would be acceptable.	379
338	MR. BROWNE Saarbrücken Tel. No. 4	Jan. 15	Reports result of Saar plebiscite.	379
339	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 17	Jan. 15	Reports alleged unwillingness of Herr Hitler to sign proposed Austrian non-intervention pact.	380

### CHAPTER III

## German Rearmament: Anglo-French Conversations: proposed Eastern Pact

January 15-February 15, 1935

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
340	RECORD OF MEETING Foreign Office	Undated	Gives conclusions of an informal meeting at the Foreign Office as to attitude to be taken towards German rearmament and information needed relating to the German army, navy, and air force. <i>Note 4.</i> These notes were considered at meeting of Chiefs of Staff on Jan. 17; cf. No. 372 below.	381
341	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 19 L.N.	Jan. 16	Mr. Eden reports M. Laval's embarrassment over British press messages foreshadowing French Govt.'s change of view regarding German rearmament.	382
342	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 18	Jan. 16	Reports conversation with Herr von Bülow who spoke against any delay in handing over of the Saar: he believed Herr Hitler had not yet made up his mind on future foreign policy. <i>Note 1.</i> French Govt.'s reply of Jan. 15 to German Govt.'s memo. of Sept. 8, 1934, on proposed E. pact.	383
343	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 19	Jan. 16	Suggests representation to German Govt. to check propaganda against Saar Governing Commission be made by all countries represented on League Council, not by H.M.G. only.	384
344	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 17 Saving	Jan. 16	Informs of Herr Hitler's reported reaction to Saar plebiscite result (No. 338).	384
345	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 19 Saving	Jan. 16	Reports he has reassured Herr von Bülow as to reasons for invitation to Germany to be represented at League Council meeting on the Saar (see No. 323).	384
346	MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Jan. 16	A note on his conversation with Prince Bismarck relating to German Govt.'s future policy.	385

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347	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 21	Jan. 17	Reports conversation with Herr von Bülow who, after seeing Baron von Neurath, confirmed Herr Hitler's unwillingness to conclude pacts and return to League: evidence as to effect of Saar victory in increasing German armaments and territorial appetite.	386
348	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 20 Saving	Jan. 17	Reports further on his conversation with Herr von Bülow, and on alleged existence of two currents of opinion in German Ministry of Foreign Affairs: army and business circles supporting moderate party against policy calculated to isolate Germany.	386
349	MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Jan. 17	Memo. on desirability of a declaration by H.M. Govt. on certain matters arising out of recent Franco-Italian agreement (cf. No. 335) in order to show community of interests with France and Italy.	387
350	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 85	Jan. 17	Informs of Sir J. Simon's interview with Signor Grandi who was given a general sketch of the purpose of forthcoming Anglo-French conversations and assured that he would be kept informed of course of events.	390
351	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 49	Jan. 18	Reports alleged increase in German rearmament demands to 400,000 men and 3,000 aeroplanes.	391
352	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 8	Jan. 18	Summarizes opinion on result of Saar plebiscite and on regularizing of German armaments: Germany more than ever thought to be chief danger in Europe from Soviet point of view.	391
353	SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 102	Jan. 18	Transmits Col. Heywood's report of a conversation on Jan. 16 with Gen. Gamelin, Chief of French General Staff, on relative strength of French and German armies, and extent to which an armament convention would be effective.	391
354	MR. STRANG Geneva	Jan. 18	Letter to Mr. Baxter summarizing agreement reached concerning Franco-German responsibility for execution of all measures relating to demilitarization arising from transfer of Saar Territory to Germany.	393
355	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 24	Jan. 19	Reports interview with Baron von Neurath on (a) proposed E. pact, (b) attitude towards Austrian pact, (c) unlikelihood of Germany's return to League of Nations, (d) desirability of armaments convention and reasons for increase in German aircraft demands.	394
356	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 23	Jan. 19	Has spoken to Baron von Neurath concerning speeches and press campaign against Mr. Knox and Saar Governing Commission (cf. No. 343); immediate action to be taken in sense desired.	396

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357	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 31 L.N.	Jan. 19	Mr. Eden's report of conversation with M. Litvinov who urged, as an essential condition of European appeasement, signature by Germany of E. pact and return to the League.	396
358	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 25	Jan. 21	Refers to No. 355: M.F.A. gave assurance that German Govt. would join Austrian pact if Great Britain did, expressed misgivings regarding Russia, and complained of Turkey's bolshevik foreign policy.	397
359	TO SIR G. CLERK Paris	Jan. 21	Letter from Sir J. Simon explaining why question of regular consultations between British, French, and Belgian General Staffs should not be discussed at forthcoming Anglo-French conversations: he should discreetly urge the French not to raise this point: hopes that M. Flandin will make some real and realistic contribution to problem of negotiating successfully with Germany.	397
360	MR. STRANG Geneva	Jan. 21	Letter to Mr. Baxter giving reasons for smallness of the vote for the <i>status quo</i> in Saar plebiscite.	400
361	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 60	Jan. 22	Comments on effect of Saar plebiscite result on future course of German domestic and foreign policy: Herr Hitler has become more independent and omens less propitious for successful negotiations with H.M.G.	401
362	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 23 Saving	Jan. 23	Reports long conversation with Herr Hitler after his dinner to heads of Foreign Missions on Jan. 22: questions discussed, (a) Austrian pact, (b) E. pact, (c) Memel, (d) possibility of Anglo-German agreement: Herr Hitler's 'almost touching solicitude for the welfare of the British Empire'.	403
363	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 25 Saving	Jan. 23	Refers to No. 362: comments on Chancellor's frankness: no pretence made that Germany would join Austrian and E. pacts if Great Britain did.	405
364	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 26 Saving	Jan. 23	Refers to No. 362: accounts by M. François-Poncet and Signor Cerruti of their conversations with Herr Hitler: his attitude generally regarded as unhelpful.	406
365	FOREIGN OFFICE	Jan. 23	Memo. by Sir J. Simon on need for further preparations for forthcoming Anglo-French conversations and a note by Mr. Sargent indicating possible lines of action: text suggested of Anglo-French formula for defining terms for legalization of German armaments.	407
366	MEMORANDUM C.P. 19(35)	Jan. 24	Note on material for impending discussions with French Ministers.	410
367	MR. EDEN Foreign Office	Jan. 24	Record of M. Benes' views in conversation at Geneva on Jan. 21 on German policy	414

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		and the desirable outcome of forthcoming Anglo-French conversations.	
368 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 17 Saving	Jan. 25	Instructions to explain text of draft formula (see No. 369) to M. Flandin and M. Laval, and, if generally accepted by them, to inform them of text of declarations proposed to be made by H.M.G. before the Anglo-French meeting.	415
369 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 18 Saving	Jan. 25	Transmits text of draft formula suggested as basis for Anglo-French discussions on a general European agreement: formula in its approved form to be issued as final communiqué.	418
370 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 27 Saving	Jan. 25	Reports alleged attitude of Herr Hitler towards E. pact, arms convention, and Danubian pact.	418
371 MR. HARVEY Foreign Office	Jan. 25	Memo. on French desiderata for Anglo-French discussions, as raised by M. Flandin and M. Massigli in conversation with Mr. Campbell: refers to increasingly aggressive attitude of German Ambassador in Paris and to pressure on French Govt. by Little Entente and Soviet Govts.	419
372 MEMORANDUM C.P. 23(35)	Jan. 25	Report prepared by the Foreign Office and Defence Services on strength of the German armed forces (cf. No. 340) and summary of objects to be attained by renewed armament negotiations.	422
373 VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow No. 56	Jan. 25	Comments on Soviet Govt.'s opposition to a Central European pact and desire for conclusion of E. pact or Franco-Soviet entente.	432
374 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 11	Jan. 27	Refers to Nos. 368 and 369: gives gist of interview with MM. Flandin and Laval who insisted that Germany's adherence to Pact of Rome and E. pact must precede abrogation of Part V of Treaty of Versailles.	433
375 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 12	Jan. 27	Transmits text of French draft formula drawn up for same purpose as that in No. 369.	434
376 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 13	Jan. 28	Reports interview with M. Laval: reasons for non-acceptance by French Govt. of formula in No. 369.	435
377 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 14	Jan. 28	Refers to No. 376: reports M. Laval's communication to him of proposed reply to expected interpellation by M. Franklin-Bouillon in French Chamber.	436
378 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 23 Saving	Jan. 28	Message from Sir R. Vansittart giving his views on French draft formula (No. 375): considers it does not form any basis on which Germany could be approached.	436
379 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 28 Saving	Jan. 28	Gives Roumanian Minister's account of a conversation with Gen. von Reichenau on rearmament.	438

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380	MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Jan. 28	Memo. on origin and purpose of proposed E. pact, with suggestion that H.M.G. should inform the French Govt. that they cannot approve of Franco-Soviet alliance.	438
381	To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 18	Jan. 29	Instructions to give a message from Sir R. Vansittart to M. Léger stressing need for some constructive policy on lines indicated in No. 369 if failure of Anglo-French conversations is to be prevented.	442
382	To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 17	Jan. 29	Expresses H.M.G.'s difficulty in understanding from information in Nos. 374-5 and 378 why French Govt. cannot accept draft formula in No. 369; hopes misunderstanding can be cleared up.	442
383	To SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 57	Jan. 29	Refers to differences in preparing ground for Anglo-French conversations: requests views of Signor Mussolini and possible intervention with French Govt.	444
384	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 15	Jan. 29	Refers to No. 382: gives reasons for attitude of MM. Flandin and Laval: considers draft formula in No. 369, as modified in No. 385 below, may be accepted as basis for discussion.	445
385	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 16	Jan. 29	Transmits text of revised formula referred to in No. 384.	445
386	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 17	Jan. 29	Transmits message for Sir R. Vansittart on action taken on No. 381.	446
387	SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. No. 2 Saving	Jan. 29	Reports Reich-German views on desirability of Anglo-German agreement, and dissatisfaction of Federal Chancery with German intentions towards Austria.	446
388	FOREIGN OFFICE	Jan. 29	Memo. on a possible mutual guarantee treaty against air attack. <i>Annex.</i> Sir J. Simon's observations on specific points raised in memo.	447 449
389	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 18	Jan. 30	Message for Sir R. Vansittart informing him of M. Laval's agreement to amended formula as basis of discussion: text transmitted.	451
390	To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 21	Jan. 30	Refers to need for an alternative to E. pact as guarantee for security of E. Europe: requests French Govt.'s views on certain points relating to bilateral pacts.	452
391	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 30 Saving	Jan. 30	Reports on Marquess of Lothian's visit to Germany.	453
392	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 101	Jan. 30	Comments on reported figures of rearmament demands.	454
393	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 20	Jan. 31	Reports action taken on No. 390 and first hurried reactions of French Ministers who were leaving for London that day.	455

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<b>394</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 30	Jan. 31	Has been informed by M.F.A. of German Govt.'s attitude towards Danubian pact, their refusal to contemplate mutual assistance clause in E. pact, and their desire for armament convention.	456
<b>395</b> SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 65	Jan. 31	Reports Signor Suvich's comments on formula in No. 389 and reactions he would expect from German Govt.	457
<b>396</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 31	Jan. 31	Reports comments by Herr von Bülow to Belgian Minister on German rearmament.	457
<b>397</b> ANGLO-FRENCH CONVERSATIONS London	Feb. 1 10.30 a.m.	Notes on <i>1st meeting</i> between representatives of H.M.G. and French Govt. held in London, February 1-3, concerning negotiations for a general agreement on armaments, security, and future of Germany. <i>Annex I.</i> British draft 'Basis of discussion' (cf. No. 389). <i>Annex II.</i> M. Laval's statement on 'Guarantees of Execution' for a disarmament convention. <i>Annex III.</i> Plan of discussion, submitted by M. Laval. <i>Annex IV.</i> French draft of 'Basis of discussion'.	458 464 464 465 468
<b>398</b> ANGLO-FRENCH CONVERSATIONS London	Feb. 1 3 p.m.	Notes on <i>2nd meeting</i> : British and French drafts of 'Basis of discussion' considered: French Ministers' proposal for an aerial agreement. <i>Annex I.</i> Text of scheme submitted by French delegation for an international aerial agreement. <i>Annex II.</i> Text of formula communicated by French delegation for immediate entry into force between United Kingdom and France of an aerial agreement. <i>Annex III.</i> Revised draft of part of 'Basis of discussion'.	469 473 474 474
<b>399</b> FOREIGN OFFICE	Feb. 1	Note by Sir J. Simon on a possible mutual guarantee treaty against air attack.	475
<b>400</b> ANGLO-FRENCH CONVERSATIONS London	Feb. 2 3 p.m.	Notes on <i>3rd meeting</i> : H.M.G.'s attitude towards suggested aerial agreement explained: procedure and final communiqué discussed. <i>Annex.</i> Text of draft communiqué on the conversations. <i>Note 4.</i> Note on <i>4th meeting</i> held at 4.30 p.m. on Feb. 3 and text of approved communiqué.	477 482 482
<b>401</b> SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 71	Feb. 2	Reports Signor Mussolini's comments to him on unlikelihood of Germany joining E. pact but possibility of her accession to Austrian pact.	484
<b>402</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 34	Feb. 2	Expresses view that German press has been instructed to maintain attitude of extreme reserve towards Anglo-French conversations: no editorial comment printed.	484

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
403	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 72	Feb. 2	Refers to No. 401: Signor Mussolini also said that Germany's return to the League of Nations must be a condition of recognition of German rearmament.	485
404	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 18	Feb. 2	Sends information on Anglo-French conversations in preparation for a possible communication to German Govt. before any public announcement is made.	485
405	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 37	Feb. 3	Informs of conversation between Gen. von Reichenau and Belgian Minister on questions of arms convention and demilitarized zone: Count Kerchove's statement that Belgium would regard violation of demilitarized zone as a ' <i>casus belli</i> '.	486
406	SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 3	Feb. 3	Reports that he has informed M.F.A. of provisional text of communiqué (No. 400, Annex).	487
407	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 38	Feb. 3	Refers to No. 404 and reports his provisional verbal communication to M.F.A.	487
408	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 39	Feb. 3	Reports that he has handed to Chancellor, in presence of French Ambassador and M.F.A., final text of communiqué (see No. 400, note 4): summarizes Herr Hitler's first reactions.	488
409	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 76	Feb. 3	Reports that final text of communiqué has been given to Signor Suvich by himself and French Ambassador: general impression was that he considered agreement most satisfactory but wanted more information about air convention.	489
410	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 77	Feb. 3	Refers to No. 409: Signor Suvich expressed fear that French Ministers might not be supported by parliamentary and public opinion in France.	490
411	SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 4	Feb. 4	Reports that final text of communiqué was sent to M.F.A. on Feb. 3: requests instructions as to whether Belgian Govt. is to be asked formally to furnish their views.	490
412	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 40	Feb. 4	Refers to No. 408 and gives further comments by Herr Hitler on an arms convention, demilitarized zone, and mutual assistance clause in E. pact.	490
413	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 78	Feb. 4	Refers to No. 409: gives more details about proposed air agreement and importance of co-operation of all Locarno powers: no suggestion made as to new commitments being entered into between H.M.G. and Italian Govt.	491
414	SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 6	Feb. 5	Informs of official communiqué to press stating Belgian Govt.'s satisfaction at Anglo-French and Franco-Italian agreements and recognising that it would be to Belgium's interest to participate in negotiation of air convention.	492



	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
415	TO SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 27	Feb. 5	Refers to No. 413 and instructs to inform French Govt. of action taken in Rome and of H.M.G.'s views on Italian Govt.'s unwillingness to consider any air agreement except in framework of Locarno.	492
416	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 83	Feb. 5	Transmits Sir R. Vansittart's account of his conversation with Signor Grandi who stressed importance to Italian Govt. of proposed air agreement being signed by the five Locarno powers and a special Anglo-Italian arrangement being made separately.	493
417	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 79	Feb. 5	Reports welcome given by press to communiqué on Anglo-French conversations: some hesitation shown as regards application of proposed air agreement to Italy.	494
418	SIR H. MONTGOMERY The Hague	Feb. 5	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart: Netherlands Govt. favourably impressed by Anglo-French conversations: enquires as to position of Netherlands and other powers outside Locarno with regard to proposed air convention.	495
419	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 84	Feb. 6	Refers to No. 413: Signor Suvich prefers single air convention between Locarno powers with a proviso that owing to geographical considerations no guarantees be exchanged between Great Britain and Italy: is opposed to extension of convention to Little Entente or other powers.	496
420	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 85	Feb. 6	Gives reasons for hoping that Italian plan will be favourably considered.	497
421	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 42	Feb. 6	Summarizes German objections to E. pact and support of air convention, as shown during informal conversation with M.F.A.	497
422	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 43	Feb. 6	Refers to Nos. 419 and 421: M.F.A. favours air convention being confined to Locarno powers.	498
423	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 23 Saving	Feb. 6	Reports M. Léger's views on position of Italy under proposed air convention.	498
424	SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. No. 4 Saving	Feb. 6	Reports views of M.F.A. on apparent readiness of Czechoslovak Govt. to help Austrian Govt. Gives information supplied by U.S. Minister as to Signor Suvich's views and alleged intentions of Herr Hitler regarding armaments.	499
425	MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Feb. 6	Record of conversation with Czechoslovak Minister about fears aroused, especially in Moscow, by Anglo-French communiqué of Feb. 3.	500
426	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 88	Feb. 7	Refers to Nos. 419 and 423, gives own views on scheme for air convention.	500

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
427	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 11	Feb. 7	Reports M. Litvinov's satisfaction with Anglo-French communiqué of Feb. 3 after conversation with French Ambassador relating to Germany's signature of E. pact.	501
428	MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Feb. 7	Memo. on probable attitude of U.S.S.R. towards a general settlement with Germany and the proposed air agreement.	501
429	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 173	Feb. 7	Informs of communication by Signor Grandi of Italian Govt.'s views on proposed air convention: wording of suggested Anglo-Italian protocol discussed.	502
430	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 140	Feb. 7	States high appreciation of Anglo-French communiqué by certain colleagues: reports queries raised by Japanese Ambassador.	504
431	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Feb. 7	Letter from Sir R. Vansittart mentioning criticism of Sir E. Phipps' entertaining of Lord Lothian (cf. No. 391) and suggesting attitude he might adopt in similar future circumstances.	505
432	MR. DORMER Oslo Tel. No. 10	Feb. 8	Has been told by Prime Minister of alleged H.M.G. suggestion to Swedish Govt. that Scandinavian and other neutral govts. should support proposals being made to German Govt. following Anglo-French conversations: possible origin of démarche.	505
433	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 44	Feb. 8	Reports that Italian Ambassador has been told by Herr von Bülow that draft of German reply to Anglo-French communiqué is being considered by Govt: indicates probable contents of reply.	506
434	SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 6	Feb. 8	French Ambassador has remarked to him on Polish Govt.'s favourable impression of London agreement and on future procedure: expresses own doubt as to wisdom of taking further action regarding E. pact.	507
435	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 25	Feb. 9	Corrects misapprehension which might arise from report of Prime Minister's speech on Feb. 7 regarding return of Germany to the League.	508
436	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 45	Feb. 11	French Ambassador has been told that German reply to Anglo-French communiqué would probably be given on Feb. 14.	509
437	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 26	Feb. 11	Sir J. Simon outlines his own views on a suggested visit by himself to Berlin at an early date and asks for observations.	509
438	TO SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 9	Feb. 11	Belgian Ambassador gives views of his Govt. (cf. No. 414) and enquires as to Belgian mode of association in negotiations for air convention and general armament scheme.	510
439	TO MR. DORMER Oslo Tel. No. 3	Feb. 11	Refers to No. 432: describes Swedish Minister's approaches to H.M.G. on two occasions and responses given: Netherlands Govt. not in favour of joint 'neutral' démarche at Berlin.	510

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
<b>440</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Feb. 11	Letter to Sir R. Vansittart in reply to No. 431: explains invitation given to Lord Lothian and stresses advantages of keeping in touch with the numerous unofficial British peace missions to Germany.	511
<b>441</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 48	Feb. 12	Refers to No. 437: gives reasons for regarding present moment as inopportune for visit.	512
<b>442</b> SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 24	Feb. 13	Reports discussion with M. Léger on difficulties of negotiation of air convention in advance of a general limitation agreement.	513
<b>443</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 49	Feb. 13	Reports conversation with Baron von Neurath who referred to forthcoming German reply to Anglo-French communiqué of Feb. 3 and suggested visit to Berlin of 'some Englishman, not too highly placed'. Suggests Mr. Sargent be sent.	514
<b>444</b> SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 5 Saving	Feb. 13	Reports M.F.A.'s enquiry concerning proposed air convention: considers position of Belgium analogous to that of Great Britain with regard to guarantee to Italy.	515
<b>445</b> TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 186	Feb. 13	Mentions a comment by Italian Chargé d'Affaires on Germany's desire to drive a wedge between other Powers.	515
<b>446</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 51	Feb. 14	Reports conversation with M.F.A. on German Govt.'s reply to Anglo-French communiqué of Feb. 3, and their readiness for Anglo-German preliminary conversations preferably at Berlin on proposed air convention and possibly other matters.	516
<b>447</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 53	Feb. 14	Gives French Ambassador's account of his interview with M.F.A.	517
<b>448</b> MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Feb. 14	Memo. on three possible occasions for conclusion of proposed air agreement.	518
<b>449</b> MR. STRANG Geneva	Feb. 14	Letter to Mr. Wigram summarizing views of M. Avenol on London agreement of Feb. 3.	520
<b>450</b> SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 25	Feb. 15	Reports press comments on German Govt.'s reply to Anglo-French communiqué.	521
<b>451</b> SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 26	Feb. 15	Summarizes first reaction towards German Govt.'s reply of the Quai d'Orsay and press generally.	521
<b>452</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 56	Feb. 15	Reports Belgian Minister's account of his conversation with Baron von Neurath, who expressed strong preference for speedy conclusion of air convention before discussion on armaments.	522
<b>453</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 55	Feb. 15	Reports Italian Ambassador's account of questions he put to Baron von Neurath concerning German Govt.'s reply to	522

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		Anglo-French communiqué and M.F.A.'s replies: suggests procedure for conclusion of air convention.	
454 To VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 13	Feb. 15	Refers to conversation on Feb. 13 between Soviet Ambassador and Sir R. Vansittart on Anglo-French communiqué: M. Maisky urged further statement by H.M.G. on their continued moral support of E. pact.	523
455 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 50 Saving	Feb. 15	Refers to French Ambassador's statement on Feb. 14 that M. Litvinov was ready to express openly U.S.S.R.'s approval of conclusions of Anglo-French conversations: H.M.G. agrees that such action was desirable.	524

#### CHAPTER IV

### Suggested visit of British ministers to Berlin: British White Paper on Defence: German rearmament measures: Anglo-German Conversations

February 15-March 27, 1935

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
456 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 51 Saving	Feb. 15	M. Corbin has emphasized French Govt.'s wish to be consulted before decision as to suggested visit of British and French officials to Berlin: cf. No. 443.	525
457 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 52 Saving	Feb. 15	M. Corbin has asked H.M.G. to reaffirm to Polish Govt. their continued interest in proposed E. pact.	525
458 SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 107	Feb. 16	Reports agreement on outstanding financial and economic Saar questions. <i>Note 1.</i> Report of Committee of Three adopted at Naples on Feb. 19.	526
459 To SIR H. MONTGOMERY The Hague No. 68	Feb. 16	M. van Swinderen's conversation with Mr. Eden as to Netherlands' position in relation to proposed air pact: other manifestations of Netherlands' recent interest in negotiations with Germany.	526
460 SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 110	Feb. 17	Reports conversation with Signor Suvich on Anglo-French communiqué of Feb. 3.	528
461 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 28	Feb. 17	Comments on attitude likely to be taken by French Govt. towards visit of British officials to Berlin.	529
462 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 29	Feb. 17	Refers to No. 442 and reports further conversation with M. Léger on possible courses of negotiation of air pact pending conclusion of general armaments convention.	529

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
<b>463</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 59	Feb. 18	Reports that proposal for Anglo-German conversations (cf. No. 446) may have originated with Herr von Ribbentrop: Ministry of Foreign Affairs said to be furious.	530
<b>464</b> VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 14	Feb. 18	Reports adverse press comments on German Govt.'s reply to Anglo-French communiqué.	530
<b>465</b> VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 15	Feb. 18	Transmits M. Litvinov's views on Anglo-French proposals of Feb. 3, as expressed to French Ambassador.	531
<b>466</b> SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 181	Feb. 18	Reports Signor Mussolini's views on German mentality and intentions, deficiencies in British understanding of German mentality, and need for a strong British air force.	532
<b>467</b> SIR N. HENDERSON Belgrade No. 53	Feb. 18	Gives reasons for Yugoslav Govt.'s anxiety as to future of proposed E. pact and possibility of Yugoslav-German agreement: has emphasized H.M.G.'s support for an Italo-Yugoslav rapprochement.	533
<b>468</b> TO SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 32	Feb. 19	Instructions to resume enquiries (cf. No. 393) on possible alternatives to proposed E. pact: outlines proposals based on existing bilateral agreements.	535
<b>469</b> VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 16	Feb. 19	Reports conversation with M. Litvinov who expressed views on Anglo-French proposals similar to those in No. 465.	537
<b>470</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 60	Feb. 19	Explains origin of <i>The Times</i> message that German Govt. hoped to receive visits from Sir J. Simon and Mr. Baldwin.	538
<b>471</b> TO SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 394	Feb. 19	Summarizes main points raised in conversation with M. Corbin on future procedure in negotiations with Germany.	538
<b>472</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 61	Feb. 20	Refers to No. 470: no trace of this suggestion in German morning press: expresses intention to discourage it if raised privately.	540
<b>473</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 62	Feb. 20	Summarizes press comments on attitude of French press towards continued negotiations with Germany and on suggested visit of British official to Germany.	540
<b>474</b> VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 17	Feb. 20	Remarks to M. Litvinov on Soviet press attacks on H.M.G.: M. Litvinov refers to reports of British opposition to an E. pact.	541
<b>475</b> TO VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow No. 98	Feb. 20	Conversation with M. Maisky on prospects of securing German adherence to proposed E. pact: he urges reaffirmation by H.M.G. of their continued interest in pact.	542
		<i>Encl.</i> Memo. communicated by M. Maisky on Soviet Govt.'s attitude towards Anglo-French communiqué of Feb. 3.	543
<b>476</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Feb. 20	Letter to Mr. Sargent summarizing conversation between Mr. Newton and a high German official on proposed	545

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		Anglo-German conversations, suggested E. pact, and the influence on foreign policy of Herr Rosenberg and Herr von Ribbentrop.	
477 To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 39	Feb. 21	Refers to No. 446: outlines H.M.G.'s views on purpose and scope of suggested Anglo-German conversations and instructs him to enquire whether German Govt. agree.	547
478 VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 18	Feb. 21	Refers to No. 468: gives his views on possible acceptance by U.S.S.R. of system of guarantees for immediate assistance imposed on existing bilateral pacts.	548
479 To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 40	Feb. 21	Instructs him to make verbal communication in No. 477 immediately: gives H.M.G.'s reasons for accepting German suggestion for conversations.	548
480 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 37 To SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 118	Feb. 21	Instructs him to tell M.F.A. of communication being made to German Govt. (see No. 477) and to use arguments contained in No. 479 if desired.	549
481 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 65	Feb. 21	Is carrying out instructions in No. 477 the following morning: refers to leakage of news in London.	550
482 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 30	Feb. 21	Refers to No. 468: reports on M. Barge-ton's proposals for modifications of E. pact and M. Laval's agreement to this procedure.	550
483 FOREIGN OFFICE	Feb. 21	Memo. on the proposed Air Convention containing comments on a report of Chief of Staff Sub-Committee and on a memo. by Sir M. Hankey, and summarizing advantages of a Convention.	552
484 SIR R. VANSITTART Foreign Office	Feb. 21	Memo. on international position of Soviet Union and her need for adequate alternatives to proposed E. pact.	559
485 To VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow	Feb. 21	Letter from Sir R. Vansittart enclosing copy of No. 484 and summarizing his own views on importance attached by H.M.G. to Russian co-operation: expresses support for visit of British Minister to Moscow.	563
486 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 31	Feb. 22	Refers to No. 480: reports M. Laval's approval of course suggested for Anglo-German conversations.	565
487 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 66	Feb. 22	Reports M.F.A.'s agreement with purpose and scope of proposed Anglo-German conversations as set out in No. 477.	566
488 SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 124	Feb. 22	Reports conversation with Signor Suvich on German reply to Anglo-French communiqué and disquieting rate of German rearmament.	566
489 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 67	Feb. 22	Summarizes reasons for expecting German Govt.'s rejection of proposals in No. 468 for guaranteeing stability in E. Europe.	567

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
490	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 68	Feb. 22	Refers to No. 479; gives reasons for considering visit by Sir J. Simon now to be essential.	568
491	SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 10	Feb. 22	Discusses proposals in No. 468 from point of view of acceptance or rejection by Polish Govt.	569
492	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 45 Saving	Feb. 22	M.F.A. strongly criticizes Soviet attitude to Anglo-French communiqué (cf. No. 475, <i>Encl.</i> ) but advises German press not to make too much fuss about it.	570
493	MR. COLLIER Foreign Office	Feb. 22	Minute recording suggestions by Estonian and Latvian Ministers for visits of British Ministers to their countries.	570
494	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow No. 87	Feb. 22	Discusses significance and purpose of M. Litvinov's note (No. 475, <i>Encl.</i> ): considers he is still anxious as to fate of proposed E. pact.	571
495	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 202	Feb. 22	Reports views of Signor Suvich on dangers of excessive docility to German demands, on German reasons for desiring air convention, and on serious situation arising from German rearmament and future intentions.	572
496	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 127	Feb. 23	Reports action taken on No. 480.	574
497	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 125	Feb. 23	Instructions to tell Signor Mussolini of M. Laval's approval of communication to German Govt. in No. 480 and to request similar message from him before Feb. 25.	574
498	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 130	Feb. 23	Refers to No. 497 and reports Signor Mussolini's approval of course proposed.	574
499	SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 7	Feb. 23	Reports reasons for Belgian Govt's preference for negotiation of two separate air conventions rather than acceptance of formula in No. 429.	575
500	SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 8	Feb. 23	Belgian M.F.A. desires to know H.M.G.'s views on responsibility of Netherlands as a neutral outside the proposed air pact, and suggestion of a system of 'territorial air' through which aircraft could pass without violating rules of neutrality.	575
501	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 70	Feb. 23	Expresses view that no assistance can be expected from Ministry of Foreign Affairs in trying to convert Herr Hitler to a revised form of E. pact.	576
502	MR. TORR Riga Tel. No. 13	Feb. 23	Summarizes attitude of Latvian Govt. to Anglo-French communiqué of Feb. 3: reports M. Munter's statement that Latvia was favourable to idea of pacts of mutual assistance.	576

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
503	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 69	Feb. 23	Refers to No. 463: reports Herr von Ribbentrop's alleged rise in Herr Hitler's estimation; effect of this on Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	578
504	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. Unnumbered	Feb. 23	Message telling Sir R. Vansittart that Herr Hitler desired to exchange views with him precisely because he was convinced that Sir R. Vansittart was opposed to him.	578
505	MR. STEEL The Hague Tel. No. 3 Saving	Feb. 25	Discusses Netherlands' position with regard to proposed air convention and suggests H.M.G. give assurance that best means of safeguarding Dutch neutrality are being examined.	578
506	MR. BROWNE Saarbrücken Tel. Unnumbered	Feb. 26	Informs of arrangements made for handing over to Germany of Saar administration on Feb. 28 and March 1.	580
507	TO MR. STEEL The Hague Tel. No. 2	Feb. 26	Message from Sir R. Vansittart in reply to No. 505: idea of 3-mile vertical limit unacceptable: no further development since position given in No. 459.	580
508	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 74	Feb. 26	Reports attitude of Herr von Ribbentrop and of Ministry of Foreign Affairs towards suggested British ministerial visit to Moscow direct from Berlin.	581
509	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 31 Saving	Feb. 26	Reports M. Léger's preoccupation with problem of an alternative to E. pact and M. Laval's anxiety to avoid a Franco-Russian agreement except as part of a homogeneous regional arrangement.	581
510	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 78	Feb. 27	French Ambassador will probably suggest postponement of decision on proposed visit to Moscow.	582
511	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 77	Feb. 27	Reports remark by Herr Hitler's private secretary on possibility of Anglo-German agreement and his own reply: indicates extent of support for this idea.	582
512	SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 11 Saving	Feb. 27	Reports Belgian Govt.'s enquiry as to possibility of visit to Brussels by Sir J. Simon on way to or return from Berlin.	583
513	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Feb. 27	Letter to Mr. Sargent commenting on Sir R. Vansittart's memo. in No. 484 and giving own views on unlikelihood of German-Russian détente.	583
514	TO SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 43	Feb. 28	Gives reasons for assuming M. François-Poncet's ideas, as expressed in No. 510, are based on misunderstanding of motives of proposed visit to Moscow.	585
515	MR. R. MACDONALD	undated	Note on Nos. 508, 510, 511, and 514, and the mixing up of visits to Berlin and Moscow, fundamentally different propositions: suggests future procedure.	585
516	FOREIGN OFFICE	Feb. 28	Memo. on present state of German air force.	586



	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
517	ANGLO-FRENCH CONVERSATION Paris	Feb. 28	Record of Anglo-French conversation on objectives of forthcoming Anglo-German conversations and on subjects for discussion. <i>Annex.</i> Text of draft Air Convention communicated by M. Laval.	590 594
518	TO SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 82 Saving	Mar. 1	Refers to Nos. 482 and 509; indicates lines upon which further conversations on an alternative to E. pact should be pursued.	596
519	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 259	Mar. 1	Sir R. Vansittart has assured Signor Grandi that the proposed visit to Berlin will have no adverse effect on Anglo-Italian relations.	597
520	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 34	Mar. 2	Reports generally favourable press comments on Anglo-French conversations (No. 517) and towards proposed Berlin and Moscow visits.	598
521	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 81	Mar. 2	Transmits text of communiqué to be issued to press relating to Sir J. Simon's arrival in Berlin on Mar. 7 for two days of Anglo-German conversations.	599
522	TO SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 18	Mar. 2	Refers to No. 500 and indicates replies which should be made to the two points raised.	599
523	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 34 Saving	Mar. 4	Reports conversation with M. Léger in accordance with No. 518: suggestions being considered.	600
524	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 86	Mar. 5	Has just been told by M.F.A. of postponement of Anglo-German conversations: Herr Hitler has suddenly become quite hoarse.	601
525	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 51	Mar. 5	Instructions to express regret at Herr Hitler's indisposition and hopes for his speedy recovery.	601
526	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 88	Mar. 5	Refers to No. 524: general impression is that illness is 'diplomatic' following reading of extracts from <i>Statement relating to Defence</i> , issued as Cmd. 4827 on Mar. 4.	601
527	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 91	Mar. 5	Refers to No. 511: suggests Herr Hitler's special fury at White Paper was due to his intention to have appealed for a direct Anglo-German understanding: possible future moves.	602
528	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 37 Saving	Mar. 5	Summarizes press comment on British White Paper on Defence.	602
529	RECORD OF MEETING	Mar. 5	Record of meeting held on Mar. 4 between representatives of Foreign Office and Service Departments to examine French draft of proposed Air Convention ( <i>Annex</i> to No. 517).	603
530	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Mar. 5	Letter from Sir R. Vansittart referring to No. 504 and explaining his attitude towards 'recent' Germany: not anti-German but pro-peace.	605
531	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 92	Mar. 6	Reports increasing strength of storm in press over the White Paper.	607

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
532	SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. Nos. 28 & 29	Mar. 6	Reports that Herr von Papen has begged him to believe that Herr Hitler was really ill and that Berlin visit would only be postponed for two days.	607
533	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 53	Mar. 6	Instructions to ascertain suitable alternative dates for Berlin visit: informs of decision taken for Mr. Eden to visit Russia and Poland.	608
534	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 95	Mar. 6	Refers to No. 533: suggests it is too early to ask M.F.A. again about date of meeting and that German Ambassador might be approached on the subject.	608
535	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 94	Mar. 6	Gives own views on possibility of visit to Berlin at later date.	609
536	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 39 Saving	Mar. 6	M. François-Poncet reports growing conviction in Berlin that Herr Hitler's illness was diplomatic: M. Léger considers further Anglo-French consultation might be necessary.	609
537	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 51 Saving	Mar. 6	Reports surprise of German Foreign Office at Herr Hitler's sudden illness: strict censorship in force on reports of repercussions in foreign countries.	610
538	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 53 Saving	Mar. 6	Describes attitude of German officials and position of Herr von Ribbentrop.	610
539	SIR E. OVEY Brussels No. 143	Mar. 6	Reports Baron van Zuylen's observations on H.M.G.'s arguments in No. 522 relating to proposed air convention and attitude of Netherlands thereto.	611
540	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Mar. 6	Letter to Mr. Sargent informing him of M. François-Poncet's account of his interview on Mar. 1 with Herr von Ribbentrop who hinted that Germany would make no further overtures to France.	612
541	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 57 Saving	Mar. 7	Reviews situation in Germany including attitude of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Herr Hitler's position, rumoured intention of increasing army to 500,000 men, and German-Polish arrangement on Danzig.	612
542	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 58 Saving	Mar. 7	Reports Herr von Bülow's statement to M. François-Poncet on possibility of visit to Berlin by Sir J. Simon in 7 or 10 days, combined perhaps with one to Warsaw and Moscow.	613
543	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 59 Saving	Mar. 7	Reports details on German rearmament position.	614
544	SIR H. MONTGOMERY The Hague Tel. No. 5 Saving	Mar. 7	Reports conversation with Belgian Minister on proposed air convention and position of Netherlands (see Nos. 500 and 522).	614

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
545	TO SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 501	Mar. 7	Informs him of Capt. McEwen's conversation with M. Flandin who seemed depressed by French internal political conditions and by German attitude which included renewed reference to colonial aspirations.	615
546	MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Mar. 7	Letter to Sir E. Phipps outlining the background of the White Paper on Defence and discussing reactions to German postponement of Berlin visit.	616
547	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 98	Mar. 8	Gives reasons for Herr von Ribbentrop's regrets at postponement of Berlin visit and for Herr Hitler's anger at White Paper.	619
548	TO MR. TORR Riga No. 69	Mar. 8	Transmits copy of memo. communicated by Lithuanian Minister welcoming Anglo-French communiqué of Feb. 3 and expressing hope that E. pact would be proceeded with.	619
549	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 102	Mar. 9	Reports M.F.A.'s proposal that Berlin visit take place between Mar. 24 and 30 subject to Herr Hitler's recovery: no change in programme.	620
550	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 104	Mar. 9	Reports M.F.A.'s comments on French and Italian Govts.' replies to German memo. of Jan. 27 on Danubian pact (cf. No. 394): his attitude towards proposed E. pact and armament convention unchanged.	621
551	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 103	Mar. 9	Reports conversation with M.F.A. on timing and contents of White Paper: M.F.A.'s assurance that no change was desired in government in Great Britain.	622
552	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow No. 110	Mar. 9	Refers to No. 509 and discusses what it is that France hopes to gain by alliance with Soviet Union.	622
553	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow No. 111	Mar. 9	Reports differing attitudes towards Soviet foreign policy and general situation in Soviet Union of Estonian and Lithuanian Ministers: suggests reasons.	624
554	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Mar. 9	Letter to Mr. Sargent attributing Herr Hitler's annoyance with White Paper to 50 per cent vanity and 50 per cent spite: M.F.A. attributes German Govt.'s annoyance, not to fact of British rearmament, but to mode and moment of its announcement.	625
555	SIR N. HENDERSON Belgrade	Mar. 9	Letter to Mr. Sargent telling him of attitude he has taken towards enquiries relating to proposed E. pact: question has not been reopened since despatch in No. 467.	627
556	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 64 Saving	Mar. 11	Thinks German Govt.'s attitude today is that each country must fix for itself its defensive requirements: considers there is now no prospect of their agreeing to a French margin of superiority.	627

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
557	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 61	Mar. 12	Instructions to ascertain whether Mar. 25 and 26 would be convenient for visit to Berlin of Sir J. Simon and Mr. Eden.	628
558	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 109	Mar. 12	Reports M.F.A.'s agreement to dates in No. 557 subject to Herr Hitler's confirmation.	629
559	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. Unnumbered	Mar. 12	Repetition of Berlin Tel. No. 61 Saving of Mar. 8 contradicting press report of Mar. 6 of meeting between himself and Herr Hitler relating to Anglo-German conversations.	629
560	LATVIAN MINISTER London	Mar. 13	Declaration made by Mr. Zarine to Sir J. Simon relating to Anglo-French communiqué of Feb. 3 and importance of securing stability in E. Europe.	630
561	TO MR. TORR Riga No. 78	Mar. 13	Gives account of his interviews with Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian Ministers to receive formal expression of their Govts.' satisfaction at H.M.G.'s attitude (cf. No. 560) and good wishes for impending visits to Berlin and Moscow.	630
562	TO SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 64 TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 191	Mar. 14	Instructions to discuss with Govt. to which accredited position raised by German Govt.'s notification on Mar. 9 of assumption, from Mar. 1, by officers of future German air force of ranks and badges of German Reichswehr officers: states H.M.G.'s view that further protest unnecessary and futile.	631
563	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 68 Saving	Mar. 14	Expresses concern at apparent non-acceptance by French Govt. of German Govt.'s attitude towards an armaments convention and their intention not to be bound to any figures as regards effectives or aeroplanes.	632
564	FOREIGN OFFICE	Mar. 14	Memo. on subjects for discussion at forthcoming Anglo-German conversations.	632
565	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Mar. 14	Letter to Mr. Sargent relating to Mr. Ward Price's interview with Gen. Göring on the constitution of the new German air force.	642
566	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 40	Mar. 15	Refers to No. 562: French Govt. strongly of opinion that German announcement should not be passed over in silence.	643
567	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 72 Saving	Mar. 15	Criticizes article on defence of Britain in <i>The Times</i> of Mar. 14 as doing a good deal of mischief in Germany in present conditions.	644
568	MR. EDEN Foreign Office	Mar. 15	Minute setting out three main objectives of forthcoming Berlin visit.	644
569	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 192	Mar. 16	Refers to No. 562: Signor Suvich's desire to await French views on German declaration: possible procedure suggested.	645

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
<b>570</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 110	Mar. 16	Has been informed by Herr Hitler of reimposition of universal military conscription in Germany in reply to two years' period of service introduced in France the previous day: peace army to consist of 500,000 men composed of 36 Divisions.	646
<b>571</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 111	Mar. 16	Refers to No. 570 and summarizes his own reaction: reports on other matters raised by Herr Hitler including his friendly feelings toward Great Britain and abuse of France, his refusal to enter into pact with U.S.S.R., and readiness to guarantee all his neighbours.	646
<b>572</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 113	Mar. 16	Has heard from M. François-Poncet that Herr Hitler has spoken to him on lines similar to those in No. 571: French Govt. reproached for turning deaf ear to all his advances: French Ambassador's protest against decision in No. 570.	647
<b>573</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 114	Mar. 16	Reports Herr Hitler's remark that he must insist on having complete parity with France on land, at sea, and in the air.	648
<b>574</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 73 Saving	Mar. 16	Reports that information given to <i>Daily Telegraph</i> correspondent by disarmament expert at Ministry of Foreign Affairs was due to decision to disclose piece-meal the existence of military air force: no similar statement on army expansion to be made before Berlin visit.	648
<b>575</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 74 Saving	Mar. 16	Reports that Polish Govt. would welcome formula to facilitate Polish acceptance of E. pact.	648
<b>576</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 76 Saving	Mar. 16	Summarizes press comments on M. Flandin's speech on Mar. 15 relating to extension of military service in France.	649
<b>577</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 262	Mar. 16	Transmits copy of despatch from H.M. Consul-General at Munich on sudden end to agitation against White Paper following House of Commons debate on Mar. 11.	649
<b>578</b> SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 195	Mar. 17	Refers to No. 569: transmits with Signor Suvich's comments text of declaration to German Govt. drafted by Italian Govt. in accordance with French wishes.	650
<b>579</b> SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 196	Mar. 17	Reports Signor Suvich's views on attitude which should be taken following German announcement in No. 570.	651
<b>580</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 116	Mar. 17	Refers to press comments on conscription announcement: suggests arguments justifying Germany's step are addressed mainly to England: speaking to France evidently thought hopeless.	652
<b>581</b> MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 43	Mar. 17	Reports M. Laval's hope for immediate Anglo-French-Italian consultation before any other step is taken.	652

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
582	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 44	Mar. 17	Reports press comments on Germany's denunciation of Part V of Treaty of Versailles.	652
583	SIR W. SELBY Vienna Tel. No. 35	Mar. 17	Reports impressions made in Austria by German decision to introduce conscription.	653
584	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 119	Mar. 17	Criticizes Signor Suvich's proposals in No. 579; suggests alternative approach: considers there may be basis of a convention in Herr Hitler's latest proposals: gives own views on proceeding with Berlin visit.	653
585	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 117	Mar. 17	Gives Italian Ambassador's account of Herr Hitler's communication to him on Mar. 16 of decree relating to conscription and reasons for it.	654
586	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 118	Mar. 17	Has been told of grave anxiety aroused in Warsaw by conscription decree and of Poland's reason for coming to an agreement with Germany.	655
587	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 45	Mar. 17	Reports general reaction to German announcement in No. 570 and demand for consultation between Great Britain, France, and Italy.	655
588	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 54 Saving	Mar. 17	Records conversation with M. Laval on Mar. 16 before German announcement in No. 570: he will not encourage a separate Franco-German agreement: plans to visit Moscow, and possibly Berlin.	656
589	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 77 Saving	Mar. 17	Reports that introduction of conscription has been received with great satisfaction in Berlin.	657
590	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 46	Mar. 18	Refers to No. 584: considers Herr Hitler's latest proposals would not be regarded by French Govt. as basis of convention: outlines probable attitude of Govt. towards Berlin visit and reference of new situation to League of Nations.	657
591	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 120	Mar. 18	Reports that appointment has been made to see Baron von Neurath at 6 p.m. to communicate H.M.G.'s note (Cmd. 4848).	659
592	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 68	Mar. 18	Refers to note to be delivered to German Govt. (cf. No. 591) and urges immediate reply to effect that German Govt. still desire visit to take place within scope and for purposes previously agreed.	659
593	TO MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 66 TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 197	Mar. 18	Instructions to inform Govt. to which accredited of note being delivered to German Govt. that day and of H.M.G.'s intention to consult them without delay.	659
594	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 123	Mar. 18	Reports note (cf. No. 591) handed to Baron von Neurath: his assurance that German Govt. will be happy to see Sir J. Simon and Mr. Eden in Berlin on Mar. 24, as previously agreed.	660

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
595	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 125	Mar. 18	Refers to No. 594 and reports Baron von Neurath's comments on H.M.G.'s note.	660
596	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 126	Mar. 18	Reports conversation between Gen. von Reichenau and H.M. Military Attaché on rearmament situation and strain on foreign relations caused by policy of secrecy: 36 Divisions (cf. No. 570) represented a programme not an actual establishment.	661
597	SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 17 Saving	Mar. 18	Transmits text of statement made by M.F.A. with regard to German announcement concerning rearmament: Belgium to remain in close contact with Great Powers.	662
598	SIR P. RAMSAY Budapest Tel. No. 10 Saving	Mar. 18	Reports on reaction of Hungary to German Govt.'s introduction of conscription: first impression appears to be satisfaction with bold and severe blow to peace treaties.	662
599	SIR R. VANSITTART Foreign Office	Mar. 18	Note on interview with M. Corbin: considers it essential that communication should not be sent to German Govt. until M. Corbin fully informed by Sir J. Simon.	663
600	TO MR. CAMPBELL Paris No. 600	Mar. 18	Informs him of conversation with M. Corbin on action being taken in regard to German announcement in No. 570: no positive objection to course proposed made by M. Corbin.	663
601	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 338	Mar. 18	Informs him of conversation with Signor Grandi on similar lines to that with M. Corbin in No. 600: no objection made to course proposed.	664
602	TO SIR E. OVEY Brussels No. 150	Mar. 18	Account of conversation with Belgian Ambassador about action being taken by H.M.G. in regard to German announcement in No. 570.	665
603	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 47	Mar. 19	Refers to No. 593: reports M. Laval's disappointment at H.M.G.'s acting without prior consultation with French Govt. and fear of further German acts of defiance.	666
604	SIR E. DRUMMOND Paris Tel. No. 208	Mar. 19	Refers to No. 593: reports Signor Suvich's views that H.M.G.'s independent action placed Italy and France in most difficult situation, was a serious miscalculation, and played into German hands. <i>Note 6.</i> Sir J. Simon's minute of Mar. 31 on justification for H.M.G.'s decision of Mar. 18.	667 668
605	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 128	Mar. 19	Reports that H.M.G.'s note of Mar. 18 (cf. No. 591) is regarded as evidence of France's inability to form common front against Germany.	669
606	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 48	Mar. 19	Reports critical press comments on decision of H.M.G. to proceed with Berlin visit.	669

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
607	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 49	Mar. 19	Reports M. Laval's insistence on an immediate Anglo-French-Italian meeting as only way of preventing situation from getting out of hand.	670
608	MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 50	Mar. 19	Refers to No. 607: gives reasons for supporting M. Laval's plea and suggests date for meeting.	671
609	TO MR. CAMPBELL Paris Tel. No. 74 TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 205	Mar. 19	Describes proposals being made to French and Italian Ambassadors for meeting in Paris on Mar. 23: expresses hope that French and Italian Govts. will confirm British protest at Berlin: instructs him to put same proposals immediately to M.F.A.	671
610	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 210	Mar. 19	Refers to No. 604: Signor Suvich has confirmed Signor Mussolini's grave concern at situation and profound distrust of Germany's intentions.	672
611	SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 13	Mar. 19	Reports uncommunicative attitude of Polish Govt. concerning German announcement (No. 570): gives own views on its likely effect on Polish relations with France and Germany.	673
612	SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 70	Mar. 19	Reports decision of U.S. Govt., as told to him by Mr. N. Davis, that there was nothing for them to do at present but wait and watch.	674
613	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 129	Mar. 19	Reports increasing tendency to rejoice at breaking of common front against Germany, and suggests measures that might be taken to emphasize H.M.G.'s solidarity with other signatories of Treaty of Versailles.	674
614	SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 11	Mar. 19	Transmits Belgian Govt.'s request that opportunity be taken at Anglo-German conversations to secure German assurance as to continued validity of Arts. 42 and 43 of Treaty of Versailles.	675
615	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 80 Saving	Mar. 19	Reports information received by Military Attaché on composition of German army and intention not to alter treaty status of demilitarized zone.	676
616	SIR G. GRAHAME Madrid Tel. No. 14 Saving	Mar. 19	Reports reaction on Spanish public opinion of German announcement of Mar. 16, and probable hastening of preparations for defence of Balearic Islands.	676
617	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 51	Mar. 20	Reports conversation with M. Laval on carrying out instructions in No. 609: reasons for preferring meeting in N. Italy: text of protest to German Govt. under consideration: attitude towards suggested communiqué.	677
618	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 215	Mar. 20	Reports Govt.'s agreement to proposed meeting in Paris, Signor Suvich to attend: protest to be made to German Govt. in concert with French Govt. before the meeting.	678



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619	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. Unnumbered	Mar. 20	Summarizes text of French note of protest to German Govt.	678
620	TO SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 66	Mar. 20	Following conversation with U.S. Chargé d'Affaires at London, stresses immense value of a comment by U.S. Govt. on German action and on British efforts to promote European confidence.	679
621	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 215A	Mar. 20	Recommends that proposed Anglo-French-Italian consultation after Berlin visit should take place in Rome or N. Italy.	679
622	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 56 Saving	Mar. 20	Reports on good reception of M. Flandin's speech in French Chamber of Deputies on Mar. 20.	680
623	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 82 Saving	Mar. 20	Refers to No. 611: reports alleged disagreement of many Poles with official enthusiasm for German friendship.	680
624	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 132	Mar. 21	Reports press attacks on M. Flandin's speech on Mar. 20, and prominence given to press telegrams reporting attacks on H.M.G.'s policy in France, Italy, and Russia.	681
625	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 133	Mar. 21	Discusses prospects of forthcoming Berlin visit resulting in a comprehensive European agreement.	681
626	SIR R. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 71	Mar. 21	Reports representations made to Secretary of State on value of statement by President in support of sanctity of treaties and collective action: reply was sympathetic but completely non-committal.	682
627	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 134	Mar. 21	Reports that French and Italian notes of protest were handed to M.F.A. that day.	683
628	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 55	Mar. 21	Reports M. Laval's gratitude to H.M.G. for bringing about meeting on 23rd and great importance he attaches to meeting in N. Italy after Berlin visit.	683
629	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 56	Mar. 21	Reports M. Laval's reasons for appealing to League of Nations at this particular moment.	684
630	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 219	Mar. 21	Refers to No. 618: transmits text of communiqué relating to British Ministers' visit to Berlin in amended form acceptable to Italian Govt.	685
631	SIR N. HENDERSON Belgrade No. 84	Mar. 21	Reports attitude of comparative indifference in Yugoslavia towards German announcement (No. 570) and indications of pronounced German leanings.	685
632	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 220	Mar. 22	Has been informed that French Govt. unable to accept text of communiqué in No. 630: suggests matter be pursued in Paris.	686
633	SIR P. LORAINÉ Angora Tel. No. 56	Mar. 22	States his impression of Turkish Govt.'s closer sympathy with H.M.G.'s methods and outlook towards present situation than with those of French Govt.	686

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
634	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 210	Mar. 22	Refers to No. 621 and instructs him to inform Signor Mussolini of H.M.G.'s acceptance of suggestion for meeting in N. Italy.	686
635	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 138	Mar. 22	Summarizes reported views of Gen. Göring on advantages of Anglo-German understanding, and of Herr Hitler on future of Czechoslovakia.	687
636	SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 16	Mar. 22	Refers to No. 611: has heard from French Ambassador of M. Beck's non-committal attitude towards German conduct and French note of protest.	687
637	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 285	Mar. 22	Describes Gen. Göring's dinner party on Mar. 15 to introduce his fiancée, Frau Emmy Sonnemann.	688
638	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome	Mar. 22	Letter from Mr. Craigie telling him that Counsellor of Italian Embassy in London has been told of Sir J. Simon's intention to raise the naval question in Berlin and to invite the Germans to send representatives for discussions in London.	691
639	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 71	Mar. 23	Instructs him on attitude to take if German Govt. puts forward a programme for forthcoming talks.	691
640	SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 17	Mar. 23	Refers to No. 636: reports Govt.'s decision to make representations at Berlin on Germany's unilateral action.	692
641	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 62	Mar. 23	Mr. Eden's report of a preliminary conversation with M. Laval, who described his difficulties following H.M.G.'s reply to German Govt.: Mr. Eden's assurances about Berlin visit.	692
642	SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 467	Mar. 23	Transmits notes of meeting between French, British, and Italian Ministers at Quai d'Orsay on afternoon of Mar. 23: subjects discussed included proposed Central European and Eastern pacts, French fear of violation of demilitarized zone, date and procedure for French appeal to League of Nations.	693
643	MR. ATHERTON U.S. Embassy London	Mar. 23	Text of telegram from Mr. Cordell Hull to Sir J. Simon relating to U.S. Govt.'s attitude towards recent events in Europe.	696
644	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 64	Mar. 24	Mr. Eden's account of a conversation with Signor Suvich at Paris on need to reach and uphold agreement as to limits of concessions to Germany: impressed with close unity between Italian and French Ministers.	697
645	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 63	Mar. 24	Mr. Eden's account of a conversation on Mar. 23 with M. Flandin who expressed disappointment at H.M.G.'s reaction to German conscription announcement; urgent need for Great Britain, France, and Italy to plan future course of action to meet eventuality, for example, of violation of demilitarized zone.	697

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
<b>646</b> SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 65	Mar. 24	Reports general satisfaction of press at result of Anglo-French-Italian meeting on Mar. 23.	698
<b>647</b> To SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 73	Mar. 25	Transmits text of telegram of Mar. 23 from Prime Minister of Union of S. Africa to S. African High Commissioner in London for communication to Sir J. Simon strongly supporting a pacific settlement of critical situation in Europe.	699
<b>648</b> SIR R. CLIVE Tokyo Tel. No. 87	Mar. 25	Reports that Japanese Govt. has been notified formally of Germany's intention to rearm and introduce conscription: press has received news calmly, tendency is to be sympathetic.	700
<b>649</b> VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow No. 133	Mar. 25	Discusses need for definition of 'immediate' and 'automatic' action under proposed Air and Eastern pacts and views of M. Litvinov.	700
<b>650</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 139	Mar. 26	Sir J. Simon's summary of two Anglo-German conversations in Berlin on Mar. 25: proposed E. and Danubian pacts and Germany's attitude to League of Nations discussed.	702
<b>651</b> ANGLO-GERMAN CONVERSATIONS Berlin		Notes on four meetings held in Berlin between representatives of H.M.G. and German Govt.	703
	Mar. 25 10.30 a.m.	<i>1st Meeting.</i> Opening statements by Sir J. Simon and Herr Hitler: discussion on proposed E. pact.	
	Mar. 25 4 p.m.	<i>2nd Meeting.</i> Discussion on E. pact continued: question of Austria and proposed Central European pact: attitude of Germany towards League of Nations: Sir J. Simon's statements on H.M.G.'s desire to have closest association with Germany without prejudice to their relations with France, and on Germany's desire for colonies as a contribution to solution of her position of inferiority.	716
	Mar. 26 10.30 a.m.	<i>3rd Meeting.</i> Question of naval armaments discussed: Herr Hitler's agreement in principle to Anglo-German meeting in London for preliminary exchanges in view of naval conference to be held in 1935: discussion on military and air armaments.	728
		<i>Annex:</i> Note handed to Sir J. Simon by Baron von Neurath giving German Govt.'s suggestions for an E. pact.	739
	Mar. 26 4 p.m.	<i>4th Meeting.</i> Discussion on proposed air pact and prohibition of bombing.	739
<b>652</b> SIR H. CHILTON Buenos Aires Tel. No. 54	Mar. 27	Reports conversation with M.F.A. who indicated his support of H.M.G.'s views on recent German actions rather than those of French Govt. and stated probable attitude of Argentine Govt. when matter raised in League of Nations.	746

# CHAPTER V

## Mr. Eden's visits to Moscow, Warsaw, and Prague: Stresa Conference March 27-April 18, 1935

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
653	SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 5 Saving	Mar. 27	Transmits Mr. Aveling's record of a conversation with M. Beck on importance attached to British visits to Berlin and other capitals, Polish Govt.'s reaction to recent events in Germany, and related problems.	747
654	SIR J. ADDISON Prague Tel. No. 6 Saving	Mar. 27	Reports Czech-Soviet declaration on occasion of signature on Mar. 25 at Prague of Czech-Soviet Treaty of Commerce and Navigation.	751
655	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 44	Mar. 28	Mr. Eden's request for guidance on (a) answer to give should M. Litvinov raise question of H.M.G.'s attitude towards an eastern pact between Soviet Govt., Baltic States, Czechoslovakia, and France, access to be open also to Poland and Germany, (b) position of Soviet Govt. with regard to forthcoming Naval Conference.	751
656	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 45	Mar. 28	Transmits Mr. Eden's personal reflections as to whether a basis exists for a general European settlement and, if not, what should be H.M.G.'s policy.	752
657	TO SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 76	Mar. 28	Instructions to inform Baron von Neurath of inaccuracy in figures of British front-line aircraft used by Sir J. Simon on Mar. 26: figure should be 690.	753
658	SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 20	Mar. 28	Transmits M.F.A.'s views on Govt.'s attitude to proposed E. pact as given to Mr. Aveling by M. Beck on Mar. 27: no new Govt. proposals being put forward but any suggestions from Mr. Eden would be welcomed.	753
659	TO VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 62	Mar. 28	Replies to questions raised by Mr. Eden in No. 655: no <i>prima facie</i> objection under (a), but hopes situation can be kept fluid pending meeting at Stresa: gives further advice on subjects for discussion.	754
660	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 87 Saving	Mar. 28	Reports M. de Brinon's account of conversations with Herr Hitler and Herr von Ribbentrop.	755
661	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 88 Saving	Mar. 28	Reports Gen. Göring has questioned Mr. Ward Price on whether H.M.G. would intervene militarily on Germany's behalf under Locarno Treaty: Mr. Ward Price's affirmative reply contrasted with that alleged to have been given by Mr. Eden to similar query.	755
662	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 305	Mar. 28	Reports probable non-application of conscription law to German Air Force: suggests factors to be borne in mind in any proposed convention concerned with length of service in the air force.	756

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
663	SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 493	Mar. 28	Transmits review of Franco-Soviet relations since 1931: comments on increasing possibility of direct Franco-Soviet agreement.	757
664	To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 84 To SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 225	Mar. 28	Instructions to inform Govt. to which accredited of desirability of maintaining freedom of action until Stresa meeting.	763
665	To VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 63	Mar. 29	Message to Mr. Eden referring to No. 659 and assuring him of H.M.G.'s complete confidence in his judgment on material he uses in discussions.	763
666	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 69	Mar. 29	Reports French press quieter: a feeling of uneasiness over present political situation in Europe remains.	763
667	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 47	Mar. 29	Message from Mr. Eden explaining origin of remarks attributed to him by Gen. Göring in No. 661, with a warning never to jest with a German.	764
668	MR. PRESTON Kovno No. 36	Mar. 29	Transmits copy of his despatch to H.M. Chargé d'Affaires at Riga telling Mr. Torr of Lithuanian M.F.A.'s query as to whether Latvia would be prepared to join Lithuania in adhering to an E. pact excluding Germany and Poland.	764
669	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 48	Mar. 30	Mr. Eden's report of his conversation with M. Stalin and M. Molotov on Mar. 29: exchange of assurances on policy of respective govts.: M. Stalin's exposition on anxieties of Far Eastern situation and need for some scheme of pacts to restrain Germany in Europe.	766
670	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 49	Mar. 30	Mr. Eden's continuation of report of his conversation with M. Stalin, in particular concerning part which H.M.G. would be willing to play in collective system and Herr Hitler's objections to mutual assistance pacts.	768
671	To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 85 To SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 226	Mar. 30	Suggests action to be taken by signatory powers of Memelland Convention unless effective steps taken by Lithuanian Govt. before end of April to establish constitutional position in Memel Territory.	769
672	FOREIGN OFFICE	Mar. 30	Note on present state of German Air Force, compiled as addendum to No. 516 in view of the Berlin conversations.	770
673	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow No. 139	Mar. 30 Mar. 28 3 p.m.	Transmits record of conversations between British and Soviet representatives at Moscow on March 28 and 29. <i>1st Meeting.</i> Mr. Eden's account of recent Anglo-German conversations at Berlin: M. Litvinov's account of relations between	771

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		Germany and Soviet Union: exchange of views on security questions in E. Europe and policy in Far East.	
	Mar. 29 11.30 a.m.	<i>2nd Meeting.</i> Further discussion on questions of security in E. Europe and future procedure: Anglo-Soviet trade and propaganda questions discussed.	784
	Mar. 31 5.30 p.m.	<i>Note 32: 3rd Meeting.</i> Text of communiqué agreed.	791
674 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 70	Mar. 31	Reports giving message in No. 664 to M. Laval who admitted that Little Entente had been pressing him hard about E. pact: considers message has come most appropriately.	791
675 SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 67 Saving	Mar. 31	Reports denial by Havas news agency of report that M. Laval might stay in Berlin on way to Moscow.	791
676 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 143	Apr. 1	Reports non-committal line being taken by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in discussing Anglo-German conversations with certain foreign correspondents.	792
677 SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 241	Apr. 1	Reports optimism of French Ambassador at Rome as to establishment of common front at Stresa in order to preserve peace and maintain authority of League of Nations.	792
678 MR. SARGENT Foreign Office	Apr. 1	Minute explaining reasons for his dislike of a Franco-Soviet military alliance as compared with a multilateral agreement for mutual security even without Germany and Poland.	793
679 To SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 708	Apr. 1	Sir J. Simon gives account of observations on Berlin conversations which he has given to M. Laval.	795
680 SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 22	Apr. 2	Mr. Eden's comments on drafting and final form of communiqué on Anglo-Soviet conversations.	796
681 SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 242	Apr. 2	Summarizes press article entitled 'Stresa', written or inspired by Signor Mussolini, containing warning against exaggerated hopes and illusions in regard to Stresa meeting.	797
682 To SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 137 Saving To SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 229	Apr. 2	Sir R. Vansittart explains H.M.G.'s desire to start informal Anglo-German naval conversations as soon as possible: requests views as to whether invitation should be postponed until after Stresa conference, especially in light of No. 664.	798
683 SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 24	Apr. 3	Mr. Eden's account of his conversation on Apr. 2 with Marshal Pilsudski who could not be drawn into discussion of current international politics.	799
684 SIR H. KENNARD Warsaw Tel. No. 23	Apr. 3	Mr. Eden's account of conversations with M. Beck on Apr. 2 relating to Poland's attitude towards proposed E. and Central European pacts and a non-aggression multilateral pact.	800

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685	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 243	Apr. 3	In reply to No. 682 expresses view that invitation to German Govt. before Stresa conference would be regarded almost as breach of faith on part of H.M.G.	800
686	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 73	Apr. 3	Refers to No. 682: considers issue of proposed invitation before Stresa conference would have disastrous reaction.	801
687	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 332	Apr. 3	Transmits memo. by Air Attaché giving reasons for assuming that Herr Hitler's remark to Sir J. Simon on existence of air parity between Germany and Great Britain bore little relationship to actual statistics.	801
688	MR. GURNEY Copenhagen No. 58	Apr. 3	Reports communiqué issued after meeting between representatives of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden on Apr. 2 on questions which might come up for discussion at League of Nations meeting on Apr. 15 (cf. No. 629), and Dr. Munch's regret at short interval between Stresa conference and League meeting.	802
689	ANGLO-POLISH CONVERSATIONS Warsaw	Apr. 2 11 a.m.	Record of conversations between British and Polish representatives at Warsaw on April 2 and 3. <i>1st Meeting.</i> Mr. Eden's review of impressions gained by his visits to Berlin and Moscow: M. Beck's summary of Poland's relations with neighbouring countries and attitude towards principle of mutual assistance: question of German rearmament.	803
		Apr. 3 11 a.m.	<i>2nd Meeting.</i> M. Beck's desire for continuation of general exchanges of views: attitude of Baltic States towards E. pact: question of Lithuania: joint communiqué agreed.	809
690	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 90 Saving	Apr. 4	Reports Herr Hitler's alleged perturbation at cool attitude of majority of British press towards him contrasted with warmth of Mr. Eden's reception in Russia; he wonders whether he was too frank during Berlin conversations: may be encouraged by attitude of <i>The Times</i> .	810
691	TO SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 436	Apr. 4	Informs him of reflections of Italian Govt. on forthcoming Stresa conference, as communicated to Sir J. Simon by Signor Grandi and of views expressed by Sir J. Simon.	810
692	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 334	Apr. 4	Comments on four maps received from M.F.A. showing (a) strength of various air forces in Europe, (b) military strength of certain European countries, (c) demilitarized zone and relative defencelessness of Germany, (d) colonial territory, including mandates, belonging to various European powers.	812
693	ANGLO-CZECHOSLOVAK CONVERSATION Prague	Apr. 4	Record of conversation between British and Czechoslovak representatives at Prague: general discussion by Mr. Eden and M.	812

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		Benes on European situation, Czechoslovakia's attitude towards proposed Central European and E. pacts, and her relations with Germany.	
694 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Apr. 4	Letter to Mr. Sargent discussing attitude of the Reichswehr, policy of Herr Hitler, and course to be pursued at Stresa.	817
695 VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 55	Apr. 5	Reports on very good impression made by Mr. Eden's visit.	820
696 FOREIGN OFFICE	Apr. 5	Memo. on questions for discussion at Stresa conference with covering note by Sir J. Simon.	820
		<i>Annex 2.</i> Notes handed by M. Laval to Mr. Eden on Mar. 23 on attitude to be taken towards Germany's unilateral denunciation of Treaty of Versailles, her return to League of Nations, and possible violation of demilitarized zone.	831
697 SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 547	Apr. 5	An appreciation of state of mind in France in face of German menace, and an estimate of attitudes likely to be adopted by French delegation during discussions at Stresa.	834
698 AIR MINISTRY	Apr. 5	Letter to Foreign Office commenting on Herr Hitler's statements during Berlin conversations (No. 651) as to German air strength and that of her most important neighbours.	838
699 MR. PRESTON Kovno Tel. No. 5 to Riga Tel. No. 24 to F.O.	Apr. 6	Reports Soviet démarche to Lithuanian Govt. as to conclusion of pact of mutual assistance by Russia, France, Czechoslovakia, and three Baltic States but excluding Germany and Poland: Lithuanian M.F.A. has promised to do nothing without consent of other Baltic States.	840
700 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 341	Apr. 6	Reflections on recent Berlin meeting (see No. 651) in so far as it throws light on German aims.	840
701 FOREIGN OFFICE	Apr. 7	Note of a statement which Mr. Eden had hoped to make to the Cabinet on Apr. 8 on his return from Berlin, Moscow, Warsaw, and Prague.	845
702 SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 255	Apr. 8	Reports press comments on alleged increasing detachment of Great Britain from France and Italy, and on growing Italian feeling against insistence on E. pact in its present form.	847
703 SIR G. CLERK Paris No. 742	Apr. 8	Gives gist of conversation on Apr. 6 between Sir R. Vansittart and M. Corbin on forthcoming proceedings at Stresa.	848
704 SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 148	Apr. 9	Reports explanation by Gen. Milch of Herr Hitler's statement relating to Germany's air parity with Great Britain.	849



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705	VISCOUNT CHILSTON Moscow Tel. No. 56	Apr. 9	Reports conversation with M. Litvinov on attitude of Baltic States and Poland towards proposed E. pact, and Italy's desire for strong line to be taken towards Germany.	850
706	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 149	Apr. 9	Reports that press telegrams from London are unanimous in predicting that H.M.G. will stand firm at Stresa conference against any proposal to isolate Germany or form bloc against her.	851
707	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome Tel. No. 256	Apr. 9	Outlines Signor Mussolini's proposal for procedure at Stresa conference.	851
708	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 94 Saving	Apr. 9	Reports M.F.A.'s statement to him that German Govt. were waiting to hear from H.M.G. as to proposed date of naval conversations in London.	851
709	MR. TORR Riga Tel. No. 20	Apr. 10	Reports substance of reply to be sent by Baltic States to Soviet enquiry concerning an E. pact (cf. No. 699).	852
710	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. Unnumbered to Stresa Tel. No. 150 to F.O.	Apr. 10	Reports alleged views of Herr Hitler regarding Stresa conference and Germany's future policy.	852
711	MR. DODDS Foreign Office	Apr. 10	Note of his conversation with Latvian Minister who had been instructed to say that his Govt. stood by declaration of Mar. 13 (see No. 560).	853
712	To MR. R. MACDONALD	Apr. 10	Letter from Sir J. Simon explaining his concern at rapid growth of German Air Force and suggesting the matter be submitted to a committee of Committee of Imperial Defence.	854
713	To MR. R. MACDONALD	Apr. 10	Letter from Minister of State for Air referring to No. 712 and informing of steps already being taken to urge further increase in R.A.F.: suggests matter be dealt with direct by Cabinet in view of extreme urgency of reaching decision.	855
714	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin	Apr. 11	Letter to Mr. Sargent discussing dissatisfaction of Herr von Bülow and colleagues with Chancellor's latest change of mood: informs him of German Air Ministry's correction of Herr Hitler's statement on air parity with Great Britain.	856
715	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 1 to Stresa Tel. No. 151 to F.O.	Apr. 12	Summarizes M.F.A.'s reply to query in No. 717 below: Germany prepared to join an E. pact on lines indicated by German Govt. even if some of the other parties arranged mutual assistance agreements, provided these were in separate documents.	857
716	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 97 Saving	Apr. 12	Reports German naval building programme for 1935, as given to Naval Attaché on Apr. 12.	858

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717	SIR J. SIMON Stresa Tel. No. 4 to F.O.	Apr. 13	Transmits copy of Stresa Tel. No. 1 to Berlin of Apr. 11 instructing Sir E. Phipps to report Herr Hitler's attitude towards joining an E. pact if supplemented by mutual assistance arrangements between other signatories.	859
718	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 2 to Stresa Tel. No. 98 Saving to F.O.	Apr. 13	Reports favourable press comments on news from Stresa conference.	860
719	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 5 to Stresa Tel. No. 154 to F.O.	Apr. 13	Refers to text of German proposals for an E. pact to be released in the press on Apr. 14: M.F.A.'s remark that reply in No. 715 was specially intended to be of assistance to British delegation.	860
720	SIR E. DRUMMOND Rome No. 427	Apr. 13	Reports press comments on Stresa conference indicate relief at prospect of some solidarity between Great Britain and two other Western Powers.	861
721	MR. PRESTON Kovno Tel. No. 22 Saving to Riga Tel. No. 30 to F.O.	Apr. 14	Reports disappointment and indignation of Lithuanian Govt. at decision of Latvian and Estonian Govts. to defer discussion on Soviet Govt.'s proposals for an E. pact until after meeting of M.F.A.s of Baltic States on May 6.	861
722	STRESA CONFERENCE	Apr. 11-14	Notes of conversations held at the Palazzo Borromeo, Isola Bella, Stresa, between representatives of United Kingdom, France, and Italy.	862
		Apr. 11 11 a.m.	<i>1st Meeting.</i> Opening statement by Mr. MacDonald: statement by Sir J. Simon on Anglo-German conversations at Berlin: discussion on points arising from statement and on future procedure.	
		Apr. 11 5.30 p.m.	<i>2nd Meeting.</i> Discussion on French Govt.'s appeal to the League in connection with German violation of Treaty of Versailles and on text of draft Council resolution.	873
			<i>Annex I.</i> Preliminary draft of resolution, communicated by French delegation.	878
		Apr. 12 9.30 a.m.	<i>3rd Meeting.</i> Discussion on draft Council resolution continued.	879
			<i>Annex I.</i> M. Flandin's re-draft of section III of proposed resolution.	882
			<i>Annex II.</i> British re-draft of section III of proposed resolution.	883
		Apr. 12 3.30 p.m.	<i>4th Meeting.</i> Discussion on draft Council resolution continued; followed by Sir J. Simon's statement on attitude of German Govt. towards an E. pact (cf. No. 715), and M. Laval's views on a Franco-Soviet mutual assistance pact; discussion on proposed Central European pact and on draft resolution in Annex I, on procedure relating to suggested Air pact, and on attitude to be taken towards German re-armament; declaration of solidarity of the	883

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		three Powers in their determination to achieve maximum measure of security.	
		<i>Annex I.</i> Draft of resolution regarding Austria submitted by Italian Govt.	892
Apr. 13 9.30 a.m.		<i>5th Meeting.</i> Agreement reached on text of draft resolution in regard to French appeal to the League: text approved of statement on Austria for inclusion in final record of conference: discussion on armaments of Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria: further procedure.	892
		<i>Annex III.</i> Draft statement, prepared by Italian delegation, on rearmament of Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria.	900
		<i>Annex IV.</i> Note on demilitarized zone in the Rhineland, communicated by French M.F.A.	900
Apr. 13 4 p.m.		<i>6th Meeting.</i> Discussion and agreement on statement relating to proposed Air pact to be inserted in final communiqué: discussion on armaments situation and on action to be taken relating to Memel affairs: agreement on text of Anglo-Italian declaration relating to Locarno engagements and the demilitarized zone.	901
Apr. 14 10 a.m.		<i>7th Meeting.</i> Further discussion on text of final communiqué, on procedure to be followed relating to question of armaments of Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria, and of representations to Lithuanian Govt. concerning Memel affairs.	909
		<i>Annex I.</i> United Kingdom draft of Air Convention.	912
		<i>Annex III.</i> United Kingdom draft statement on solidarity of the three Powers.	914
<b>723</b> MEMORANDUM	undated	Memo. communicated on Apr. 13 by M. Léger to British delegation at Stresa on economic measures with the object of restraining German rearmament.	914
<b>724</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 156	Apr. 15	Reports that German press continues to regard Stresa conference with quiet satisfaction.	919
<b>725</b> To SIR J. SIMON Stresa Tel. No. 73	Apr. 15	Comments on German naval programme in No. 716 and suggests appeal be made to German Govt. to withhold announcement of the programme pending Anglo-German naval discussions.	919
<b>726</b> SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 23 to Geneva Tel. No. 159 to F.O.	Apr. 16	Reports Herr von Bülow's welcome of H.M.G.'s reaffirmation regarding Locarno agreement in view of approaching Franco-Soviet-Czechoslovak 'military alliance' and potential strength of Soviet air force.	920
<b>727</b> SIR E. OVEY Brussels Tel. No. 35	Apr. 16	Reports request of Belgian M.F.A. for more information on proposed air pact and bilateral agreements which might accompany it.	921

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728	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 72 L.N.	Apr. 17	Message from Sir J. Simon referring to No. 725: doubts advisability of suggested appeal to German Govt.: French and Italians have been told of proposal to hold naval conversations with Germany in near future.	921
729	SIR R. MICHELL Santiago Tel. No. 39	Apr. 17	Chilean representative on Council of League of Nations has been instructed to follow lead of British delegate: Chilean Govt. desires to avoid offending Germany or France.	922
730	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 25 to Geneva Tel. No. 161 to F.O.	Apr. 17	Emphasizes far-reaching consequences expected in Germany if Geneva Resolution (cf. No. 722, 5th meeting) is passed in its present form.	922
731	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin Tel. No. 162	Apr. 17	Reports strong reaction in Germany to passing of Geneva Resolution: Poland's vote for it appears only bright spot.	923
732	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 73 L.N.	Apr. 17	Sir J. Simon's report of meeting of League Council on Apr. 17 to discuss joint Anglo-French-Italian Resolution, its unanimous adoption with Danish representative alone abstaining, and formation of committee proposed in Part III of Resolution.	924
733	SIR E. PHIPPS Berlin No. 377	Apr. 17	Refers to No. 637 and describes scenes at gala performance at the Opera on eve of Gen. Göring's wedding to Frau Emmy Sonnemann and in Berlin on the day of the wedding.	925
734	MR. PATTESON Geneva Tel. No. 74 L.N.	Apr. 18	Sir J. Simon's comments on reasons for H.M.G.'s collaboration with France and Italy on Resolution relating to Germany's unilateral repudiation of treaty obligations, and on German reaction as described in No. 730: considers agitation against resolution was largely worked up to deter its passage.	927
735	SIR G. CLERK Paris Tel. No. 79	Apr. 18	Reports considerable gratification in French press at passing of Geneva Resolution, tributes to M. Laval, and relief at news that Franco-Soviet mutual assistance agreement is on point of signature.	928

## CHAPTER I

# Questions of Security and Rearmament: proposed Eastern Pact, Austria, Saar Territory

August 5–October 30, 1934

### No. 1

*Mr. Murray*<sup>1</sup> (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 5, 2.30 p.m.)  
*No. 226 Telegraphic [C 5325/247/18]*

ROME, August 5, 1934, 12.20 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>2</sup>

Speaking of German situation Signor Suvich said that he did not like recent developments and the assumption of Herr Hitler of dual functions of President and Chancellor.<sup>3</sup> However in his view Germans were at present quite mad. So mad that they seemed unable to see they had everything to gain by coming into the Eastern pact of Mutual Assistance;<sup>4</sup> far more to gain in fact than they had had in concluding their ten year pact with Poland<sup>5</sup> which amounted to definite renunciation of all hopes of regaining the Corridor.<sup>6</sup> If Stresemann<sup>7</sup> had concluded such a pact he would have been murdered like Rathenau;<sup>8</sup> Herr Hitler had got away with it but would one day be called to account by his countrymen.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> Counsellor in H.M. Embassy at Rome and acting Chargé d'Affaires during the absence on leave of the Ambassador, Sir E. Drummond.

<sup>2</sup> In this telegram of August 4 (not printed) Mr. Murray reported that he had spoken that day to Signor Suvich, the Italian Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on the Austrian situation, as instructed; cf. Volume VI, No. 561.

<sup>3</sup> The offices of President of the Reich and Chancellor of the Reich had been combined on the death of President von Hindenburg on August 2; cf. *ibid.*, No. 555.

<sup>4</sup> For the first steps in the development of proposals for an Eastern Pact, see *ibid.*, Chapters VII and VIII, e.g. Nos. 487–9, 492, and 516.

<sup>5</sup> An English translation of the Declaration of Non-Aggression and Understanding between Germany and Poland signed at Berlin on January 26, 1934, is printed in *British and Foreign State Papers (B.F.S.P.)*, vol. 137, pp. 495–6; cf. Volume VI, No. 219. See also *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945 (D.G.F.P.)*, Series C, vol. ii, No. 219.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. 'the Polish Corridor' separating East Prussia from the rest of Germany.

<sup>7</sup> Herr Gustav Stresemann had been German Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1923 until his death in October 1929.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Walther Rathenau, Minister for Foreign Affairs in Chancellor Wirth's administration of 1922, had been murdered in Berlin on June 24, 1922, two months after signing, on April 16, the German-Soviet Treaty of Rapallo (*B.F.S.P.*, vol. 118, pp. 586–7).

## No. 2

*Viscount Chilston<sup>1</sup> (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 6, 2.5 p.m.)  
No. 108 Telegraphic [C 5324/247/18]*

MOSCOW, August 6, 1934, 12.50 p.m.

My telegram No. 107.<sup>2</sup>

I understand from Italian Ambassador that M. Litvinov<sup>3</sup> told him that if Eastern Regional pact failed to materialise he would be content with bilateral pact (Franco-Soviet).

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Ambassador at Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> Volume VI, No. 562.

<sup>3</sup> People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in the Soviet Union.

## No. 3

*Letter from Mr. Campbell<sup>1</sup> (Paris) to Mr. Wigram<sup>2</sup>  
[C 5426/247/18]*

BRITISH EMBASSY, PARIS, August 6, 1934

My dear Wigs,

Your letter of August 3<sup>3</sup> about Poland and the proposed Eastern Guarantee Treaty.

I am not surprised that you thought the French manner of dealing with the Polish objections was inadequate. The fault was with me rather than with the Ministry. The fact is that my head was in a whirl after 1½ hours solid with Léger<sup>4</sup> during which he did the bulk of the talking and in the course of which he read me the telegram to Laroche<sup>5</sup> consisting of fourteen foolscap pages of close typescript. When I had boiled down the more meaty part of the interview into our telegram No. 222<sup>6</sup> I wondered whether it would be of sufficient interest to the Foreign Office for me to try and remember in greater detail the terms of the instructions to Laroche. Result, our telegram No. 223.<sup>7</sup> I was so dissatisfied with it when I had drafted it that I hesitated for a long time whether to send it (the Ambassador<sup>8</sup> was at Nancy). I was afraid that, being very incomplete, it might possibly be misleading, but eventually decided to send it nonetheless. I am sorry now I didn't obey my first instincts and tear it up.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. R. H. Campbell was Minister in H.M. Embassy at Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. R. F. Wigram was Head of the Central Department of the Foreign Office. The date of receipt of this letter is not recorded.

<sup>3</sup> Volume VI, No. 564.

<sup>4</sup> Secretary-General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>5</sup> French Ambassador at Warsaw.

<sup>6</sup> The reference should evidently have been to Paris telegram No. 220 Saving; see Volume VI, No. 558. Telegram No. 222, not preserved in Foreign Office archives, dealt with another subject.

<sup>7</sup> A reference presumably to Paris telegram No. 223 Saving; see *ibid.*, No. 559.

<sup>8</sup> Sir George Clerk.

I don't think you need worry. It was the completeness of the telegram which Léger read that was my undoing. He quoted and dealt with every possible Polish objection expressed and unexpressed, and, so far as I could judge, dealt with every contingency that the Poles could conceivably fear. I do not therefore propose to go out of my way to mention it again to Léger, but the memorandum which you sent us<sup>9</sup> (which does not however of course attempt to dispose of the Polish objections, as the telegram to Laroche did) will be most useful to us in further conversations on the subject of the proposed Pact.<sup>10</sup>

Yours ever,  
RONALD CAMPBELL

<sup>9</sup> See enclosure in No. 564, *ibid*.

<sup>10</sup> In a note on this letter Mr. Wigram wrote: 'I have telephoned to Mr. Campbell about this: and he is going to send us a full account of what M. Léger said. R.F.W. 8/8.' See No. 6 below.

#### No. 4

*Mr. Aveling<sup>1</sup> (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 9, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 47 Telegraphic [C 5422/247/18]*

WARSAW, August 8, 1934, 9.25 p.m.

Paris telegram No. 220 Saving.<sup>2</sup>

French Ambassador has spoken at length to Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>3</sup> on the lines of paragraph 3 of above telegram. He read me record of his conversation in the course of which he appears to have argued case for Polish participation in very convincing and unambiguous language.

Ambassador formed impression that, whilst somewhat less hostile than hitherto, Minister for Foreign Affairs would like to see proposals come to nought though he seemed rather less ready to assume responsibility for their rejection.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told him that there was no likelihood of Polish Government declaring its attitude until the end of this month or beginning of next.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin, Moscow and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. A. F. Aveling was First Secretary in H.M. Embassy at Warsaw and acting Chargé d'Affaires.

<sup>2</sup> Volume VI, No. 558.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel Josef Beck.

No. 5

Sir E. Phipps<sup>1</sup> (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 9)

No. 175 Saving: *Telegraphic* [C 5448/29/18]

BERLIN, August 8, 1934

Since my return last week to Berlin and during my journeys to and from Tannenberg<sup>2</sup> I found my foreign colleagues very pessimistic as to the situation in Germany and as to what the future holds in store. I must regretfully admit that I see no reason to take a more cheerful view than they.

Both the funeral session of the Reichstag and the ceremony yesterday within the grim walls of the colossal fortress-like memorial at Tannenberg were carried out to perfection and without a hitch. On both occasions there must have been many of those present who hoped that some light might come to the Führer, some great change in this grave hour. No change, however, was apparent, at least none for the better.<sup>3</sup> Violent, arrogant, fanatical, his manner more than his actual language bodes ill for such of his unfortunate countrymen who venture to differ from him. At Tannenberg his last words were to consign the late Field Marshal to Walhalla, that abode of false and dreary Wagnerian gods, where no civilised being would wish to spend a week-end. This peroration is illuminating and reveals the vulgarity of his highest ideal.

The prospects of a prosperous Germany led by such a man, and such lieutenants, would be none too bright. But Germany is the reverse of prosperous and her economic and financial fate is in the hands of Dr. Schacht,<sup>4</sup> whose financial ability is dimmed by his aggressive Jingoism and by his blind worshipping at the Nazi shrine. Dr. Schmitt's<sup>5</sup> illness is, I hear on good authority, a diplomatic one and due to his growing disgust for Nazi methods. True he was a weak man, but I should say an honest one.

Reichswehr circles too are, I am assured, none too happy and do not all approve General von Blomberg's<sup>6</sup> subservience to Herr Hitler, to whom, however, they have sworn unconditional obedience. In three matters recently it is felt that the latter was badly advised: (1) the 'clean-up' of June 30th;<sup>7</sup> (2) his policy towards Austria; and (3) his assumption of the joint office of Head of the State and Chancellor. In this connexion certain Nazis maintain that the abolition of the title of President is due to Herr

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Ambassador at Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> To attend the burial service on August 7 for President von Hindenberg in the Feldherrn tower of the Tannenberg Memorial in East Prussia.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times* correspondent noted on August 8 (p. 10) that Herr Hitler's speech was almost identical with the one he had made in the Reichstag the previous day (cf. *ibid.*, August 7, p. 10), and mentioned the possibility that he had been provided with the wrong typescript.

<sup>4</sup> President of the Reichsbank since March 17, 1933; acting Reich Minister of Economics since July 30, 1934.

<sup>5</sup> Reich Minister of Economics, on leave of absence since July 1934.

<sup>6</sup> Reichswehr Minister.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Volume VI, Nos. 473-8, 480, and 527.



Hitler's wish to be able at some future time, and if things go too badly, to restore the monarchy.

On the international plane it is probable that Hitler is sincere—for the present—when he bellows peace in his speeches or bleats it in interviews with foreign pressmen, but meanwhile German armament proceeds apace and my French colleague affirms that the triple expansion of the Army will be completed by October.<sup>8</sup> Quite apart from the imminence or otherwise of this eventuality, the risk of some disagreeable incident cannot be overlooked.

To bind Germany and her rulers by an Eastern pact of mutual assistance would seem highly desirable: but pact or no pact, it appears essential for Europe, whilst careful to avoid giving Germany any just cause for complaint, to remain watchful, strong and as united as possible.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> A reference presumably to the increase of the German army from the 100,000 men permitted by the Treaty of Versailles to 300,000 men; cf. *ibid.*, Nos. 456 and 483.

<sup>9</sup> In a minute of August 12 Sir R. Vansittart, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, remarked that Sir E. Phipps's concluding words were 'what we have long realised *here*. Indeed I have said it ad nauseam since Hitler reached power. Other countries also have an inkling of the truth. I am still none too sure about this vacillating and indifferent country of ours, though I feel that *some* impression has been made during the past year. Not enough though. Any shortcoming will not be, and has not been, the fault of the F[oreign] O[ffice]. R.V. Aug. 12.'

## No. 6

*Letter from Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Mr. Wigram<sup>1</sup>*

[C 5577/247/18]

BRITISH EMBASSY, PARIS, August 8, 1934

Dear Wigram,

After receiving your telephone message this morning<sup>2</sup> I was lucky enough to be able to see Léger at once. I asked him whether, as a personal favour, he would let me have privately for a few hours the text of the long telegram to Laroche. He said he could not do that as it was a cypher telegram, but that he would gladly have a full analysis made and sent to me, he hoped, before 8 o'clock this evening. At the time of writing (6 p.m.) it has not yet come. If it arrives in time I will enclose it in this letter. If not, then we must send it on by air bag tomorrow.

I took the opportunity to ask him whether he thought the Poles would maintain their opposition to the pact in the teeth of the strong action which the French were taking in Warsaw. He said he did not think they would resist it openly, but that they would continue to try to defeat it by tortuous methods. They had already, as he had mentioned to me before (see Paris telegram No. 213 Saving)<sup>3</sup> endeavoured to defeat it by putting up the

<sup>1</sup> Date of receipt not recorded: this letter was filed in the Foreign Office on August 15.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 3, note 10.

<sup>3</sup> Volume VI, No. 534.

Roumanians to insist upon coming in. The objections to Roumanian participation were as follows:

The essence of the scheme was that it should be strictly regional in character. Its object was to reduce the tension between Germany and her eastern neighbours by increasing their sense of security. The scheme therefore revolved round Germany, just as it had done in the case of Locarno.<sup>4</sup> It was thus restricted to Germany's neighbours, with the exception of Austria which was in a somewhat different position as being what Léger described as a 'pays assisté': she had obligations (e.g. the Treaty of St. Germain<sup>5</sup> and the Geneva Protocol<sup>6</sup> relating to Austrian independence) which precluded her from being an entirely free agent. It was moreover precisely among these countries that there were potential causes of conflict, e.g., between Poland and Lithuania, between Germany and Poland and (unfortunately) between Poland and Czechoslovakia. If Roumania were admitted Bulgaria would be justified in claiming also to come in, and so on ad infinitum. A decision to admit Roumania would thus, apart from destroying the regional character of the pact which was its real value, give rise to innumerable complications and assuredly defeat the already rather slender hope of bringing the scheme to maturity.

So much for the theoretical aspect. In the realm of actual fact, Russia was dead opposed to the admission of Roumania on the ground that it would get her into difficulties with Turkey. (This may be a genuine reason but I suspect there is another and less creditable one).

As to the actual position Léger recalled that he had told me the other day<sup>7</sup> that Tataresco,<sup>8</sup> when in Paris, had fully understood that Roumania would needlessly complicate matters if she claimed to participate, but that Titulescu,<sup>9</sup> that very subtle politician, was playing up to Beck's<sup>10</sup> little game. The French had however been in communication with him in the south of France and had endeavoured to stop him from persisting in his demand. He had agreed, though refusing to withdraw it, to let it remain, as it were, in abeyance until Germany and Poland had definitely declared their attitude. In reply to that, the French, though refusing to commit themselves, had agreed that if and when negotiations were successfully concluded between the parties embraced in the original scheme, the question of Roumania's participation might be considered.<sup>11</sup>

Yours ever,  
R. H. CAMPBELL

<sup>4</sup> See *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 121, pp. 923-6, for the text of the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee between the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Germany, and Italy initialled at Locarno on October 16, 1925. <sup>5</sup> Of September 10, 1919; see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 112, pp. 317 ff.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. Protocol No. 1 of the Geneva Agreement of October 4, 1922; see *ibid.*, vol. 116, p. 851. Cf. Volume VI, No. 263, note 3. <sup>7</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, No. 534.

<sup>8</sup> M. Gheorghe Tataresco was Roumanian Prime Minister.

<sup>9</sup> M. Nicolae Titulescu was Roumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. No. 4, note 3.

<sup>11</sup> A postscript to this letter said that the communication from the Quai d'Orsay had just been received and was enclosed. It is not printed here.

No. 7

*Sir P. Loraine<sup>1</sup> (Constantinople) to Sir J. Simon  
(Received August 14, 12 noon)*

*No. 18 Saving: Telegraphic [E 5238/4048/44]*

CONSTANTINOPLE, August 9, 1934

Your telegram No. 14.<sup>2</sup>

I took action yesterday with Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs on instructions conveyed to me by your telegrams 7 and 12.<sup>3</sup>

As wording especially in the case of response to Ghazi's overture was important and as you preferred there should not be a written communication I prepared two texts in form of an unaddressed and unsigned letter which Minister for Foreign Affairs will return to me after taking notes.

I am sending copies of texts in question by bag.<sup>4</sup>

Both communications were highly appreciated and most favourably received by Minister for Foreign Affairs.

As regards response to Ghazi's overtures he said important words were 'true and open' friendship.<sup>5</sup> A friendship that was hidden from no one and was aimed against no one was what Turkey wanted and was most glad to have. Actual effect of exchanges which had now taken place was to confirm authoritatively an existing situation of fact but confirmation was most important and highly satisfactory to Turkish Government. He took the view that our reply had a positive and a negative value. Positive as regards confirmation of Anglo-Turkish friendship, negative in so much as it implied that neither Government was or would be a party to any combination hostile

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Ambassador at Angora.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. In three Saving telegrams, Nos. 5 and 6 despatched on June 20 and No. 7 despatched on June 22 (all received on June 29), Sir P. Loraine gave an account of a game of poker with the Gazi, Mustafa Kemal, which began on the evening of June 17 and ended at 9 a.m. on June 18. Afterwards the Gazi, in an informal conversation, said that 'he had deliberately staged the proceedings and was glad of the opportunity of seeing me'; that 'he had the greatest esteem for England and that he wished for friendship with England'; but that 'if England really desired this on her part, he would want us to make some unmistakable sign to that effect'. The Foreign Office was somewhat mystified by this approach. Commenting on Sir P. Loraine's telegrams on July 16 Sir J. Simon wrote: 'I never do understand appeals to seize the hand stretched out to us, and to break the ice with an olive-branch, etc.' Nevertheless, telegram No. 14 of August 3 authorized the Ambassador to see the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tefvik Rüstü Bey, when he was next in Constantinople in order to reply to the Gazi's overture.

<sup>3</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 7 of July 17 set out the cordial but general terms in which the Ambassador was to reply to the Gazi's approach of June 18. Telegram No. 12 of July 27 dealt with the Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee, see No. 11 below, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> These two texts, based on instructions in Foreign Office telegrams Nos. 7 and 12 respectively, were received in the Foreign Office on August 24 as enclosures in Sir P. Loraine's despatch No. 390 of August 14, not printed.

<sup>5</sup> Sir P. Loraine's communication said that His Majesty's Government 'apprécie bien hautement l'attitude amicale de Son Excellence et partage avec la plus grande cordialité son désir d'avoir des relations étroites d'amitié sincère et ouverte entre les deux Gouvernements . . .'

to the other. He asked me whether I likewise understood message to convey this negative sense. I said that it had never even occurred to me that a direct or implied statement to that effect was required but as his interpretation obviously corresponded with the facts so far as we were concerned and as he said Turkey understood her relationship towards us in that sense, I found no difficulty at all in subscribing to his construction. He thanked me very cordially and said that he was not a dreamer who sought for the eternal in politics. It quite sufficed him to know that was the position between the present Governments in London and Angora. I told him that you also felt need of prudence in so much as existing relations were excellent and sometimes the best proved to be the enemy of what was well. He said that he understood this perfectly and to paraphrase his language—that this friendship must not be strained. But now this most satisfactory basis was established we could afford to allow our friendship to progress by evolution which might indeed be none the worse for being slow. But he saw great possibilities for the future now that foundation had been so fortunately laid; it would have to be a long and patient haul and probably it was better so; the results would be the more enduring.

In conclusion he said that I could rely on my communication being much appreciated and warmly welcomed by the Ghazi.

See my immediately following telegram (Saving).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> No. 11 below.

## No. 8

*Mr. Newton<sup>1</sup> (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 10, 4.30 p.m.)*

*No. 226 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 5498/90/18]*

BERLIN, August 10, 1934

Anglo-German exchange agreement for commercial payment[s]<sup>2</sup> was signed this afternoon. Originals and certified copies<sup>3</sup> are being sent by bag.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. B. C. Newton, Counsellor in H.M. Embassy, Berlin, acted as Chargé d'Affaires August 9 to September 2, 1934, during the absence on leave of Sir E. Phipps.

<sup>2</sup> For the text see Cmd. 4673 of 1934, *Anglo-German Exchange Agreement relating to Commercial Payments*; cf. *The Times*, August 11, p. 9. This Agreement applied only to future transactions, not to outstanding commercial debts.

<sup>3</sup> Received in the Foreign Office on August 18 as enclosures in Berlin despatch No. 965 E of August 14.

No. 9

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 72 Saving: Telegraphic [R 4405/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 10, 1934

In his telegram No. 20 Saving, of 3rd August, His Majesty's Minister at Vienna<sup>1</sup> records his opinion that the present Austrian Government<sup>2</sup> has little popular support and that, if it pursues its uncompromising policy towards other political parties in Austria, it will find its position increasingly precarious. He considers it essential, therefore, that the Austrian Government should endeavour to broaden the basis of its support in the country by adopting a conciliatory attitude both towards the Socialists (*e.g.*, by taking such steps as the release of Herr Seitz),<sup>3</sup> and towards responsible Nationalist elements who have hitherto been pan-German but who view with distrust terrorist Nazi methods.

2. The French Government would doubtless welcome the adoption by the Austrian Government of a policy which would broaden and make more secure the basis on which it rests, and the question arises whether any advice could usefully be tendered to Austria on the subject. The attitude of Italy is at present less certain, and it is obvious that no advice could usefully be given at Vienna unless the Italian Government whole-heartedly associated themselves with it.

3. The French Government recently proposed that the three Powers should establish at Rome a consultative body for the discussion of the Austrian problem.<sup>4</sup> While I was unable to agree to this proposal, I was, and still am, strongly in favour of close consultation between the three Governments whenever suitable occasion arises, and I should like to know whether Sir W. Selby's appreciation of the Austrian situation is shared by the French Government, and whether the French Government would favour representations being made on the subject to the Italian Government at Rome. If so, I would suggest that the French Ambassador and His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Rome should be simultaneously instructed to put these views before the Italian Government and enquire whether, for the serious and valid reasons given, they would be prepared to tender similar advice at Vienna.

4. You will note that Sir W. Selby, in his telegram, suggests that, in the event of such advice being given and accepted by the Austrian Government, the three Governments should promise Austria all possible moral support

<sup>1</sup> For this telegram from Sir W. Selby see Volume VI, No. 563.

<sup>2</sup> After the murder of Dr. Dollfuss on July 25, 1934 (*cf. ibid.*, No. 528) a Cabinet had been formed in which Dr. von Schuschnigg was Chancellor and Prince Starhemberg Vice-Chancellor (*cf. ibid.*, No. 541).

<sup>3</sup> Herr K. Seitz, a leader of the Austrian Social Democrat party, had been the first President of the Austrian Republic. At the time of his arrest, on February 12, 1934, during the Socialist disturbances in Austria, he was Burgomaster of Vienna; *cf. ibid.*, Nos. 293 and 300.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, No. 560.

against German demands. The term 'moral support' is a vague one, and my objection is that it might be interpreted by the Austrian Government or by others as going beyond the terms of the declaration of 17th February,<sup>5</sup> an interpretation in which His Majesty's Government would not be able to concur. The proposed advice should be tendered as constituting, in the opinion of the three Powers, the best method of maintaining the independence and integrity of Austria, which we, in common with the Austrian Government, have at heart. Beyond that we need not and should not now go. The second point in Sir W. Selby's telegram may therefore be left out of account in your conversation at the Quai d'Orsay.

5. There may be, as the French Government possibly have in mind, something to be said for eventually inviting the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak Governments to associate themselves with any advice which may be given in the sense suggested, as they would no doubt be willing to do. But, in view of well-known Italian susceptibilities, I should prefer for the present not to make a suggestion which might prejudice the chances of acceptance of our proposal by the Italian Government, and we should therefore for the moment confine ourselves to the main issue, which should be to secure Italian concurrence.

6. You should speak to the French Government as soon as possible in the sense of this telegram.

Repeated to Rome, No. 38 Saving, and Vienna, No. 10 Saving.

<sup>5</sup> For this joint British-French-Italian communiqué expressing 'a common view as to the necessity of maintaining Austria's independence and integrity in accordance with the relevant treaties', see *ibid.*, Nos. 288-90. In a letter of November 15, 1934, to the Foreign Office relating to this declaration of February 17, Mr. Harvey (First Secretary in H.M. Embassy, Paris) said: 'It was all settled orally and by telephone and no authentic signed note or memorandum on the subject exists.'

## No. 10

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 10, 1.30 p.m.)*

*No. 23 Saving: Telegraphic [R 4482/37/3]*

VIENNA, August 10, 1934

I visited Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>1</sup> this morning on the occasion of his first reception of the Corps Diplomatique.

In reply to my enquiry as to the attitude of the Austrian Government towards the mission of Herr von Papen,<sup>2</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that agrément had been granted and that Austrian Government now intended to wait and see whether Herr von Papen would act in 'good faith'. He said,

<sup>1</sup> Baron Egon von Berger-Waldenegg.

<sup>2</sup> The German Government had requested on July 27 the *agrément* of the Austrian Government to the appointment of Herr von Papen as German Minister to Vienna; cf. Volume VI, Nos. 541, 543, and 550. See also *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 123.

speaking with great emphasis, that Austria desired peace with Germany on 'possible' conditions and would do nothing to complicate the situation. The Austrian Government regarded maintenance of independence of Austria as the rock on which peace organisation rested and the two conditions for a settlement with Germany remained the same as those always insisted on by Herr Dollfuss, namely recognition by Germany of independence of Austria and non-interference in internal affairs of Austria. From these conditions present Government would not depart.

He added that they were under no illusion as regards Herr von Papen and indicated deep suspicion they entertained as regards good faith of the German Government in appointing him.

I thanked Minister for Foreign Affairs for this categorical statement as to the policy of Austrian Government and reminded him of statement made by you Sir, a few days ago to the effect that policy of His Majesty's Government was maintenance of Austrian independence.<sup>3</sup>

*Confidential*

United States Minister<sup>4</sup> who had preceded me told me he had warned Minister for Foreign Affairs that Austrian Government should be on their guard as regards Herr von Papen whose record justified the strongest suspicions as to his good faith. United States Minister had added that he had made up his mind in the spring of 1933 that present German Government was 'not negotiable' and that Austrian Government would be well advised to bear this consideration in mind in their dealings with Herr von Papen.

Repeated to Berlin No. 13 Saving.

<sup>3</sup> A reference presumably to Sir J. Simon's statement in the House of Commons on July 26 (292 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 1942-4) that His Majesty's Government's policy towards Austria remained unchanged from that in the declaration of February 17, 1934 (for which see No. 9, note 5). Cf. Volume VI, No. 531.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. George Messersmith.

## No. 11

*Sir P. Loraine (Constantinople) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 14)*

*No. 19 Saving: Telegraphic [C 5561/247/18]*

CONSTANTINOPLE, August 10, 1934

My immediately preceding saving telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs was much gratified by your message in connexion with proposed East European Pact of mutual assistance and touched by your personal attention and by your allusion to Turkey's labour in the cause of peace.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 7.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram No. 50 of July 19 from Angora (received July 20) Sir P. Loraine had reported Tefvik Rüstü Bey as saying that his Government, while giving their blessing to the

He said concise description of your attitude and of considerations which determined the policy of His Majesty's Government was highly important and most valuable to him. It invested your conversations with Monsieur Barthou<sup>3</sup> with a clarity that had hitherto been lacking to him. He reiterated his eulogy of your policy and concurred readily in my suggestion that principles defended by His Majesty's Government in regard to complete reciprocity of guarantees, the shunning of selective alliances and inter-relation of security and disarmament were exactly in agreement with Turkish principles.

Your communication greatly reinforced the view he had already expressed in conversation with German Ambassador here, to the effect that Germany would be unwise to refuse the pact. He could not predict whether the pact would succeed and thought that even if preliminary agreement in principle were secured it might take a long time to hatch out a satisfactory text. The basis for beginning of continuous negotiation would be greatly strengthened by entry of Russia into League of Nations; he hoped this would be done in September; he seemed to think there was a chance of its being so; he felt sure that delay was undesirable, as likely to offer loopholes to Germany and maybe also to Poland.

proposed Eastern Pact, had informed the Soviet Government that they disinterested themselves in it; and that in return the Soviet Government had told the Turkish Government that they disinterested themselves in any eventual Southern Mediterranean Pact. Sir P. Loraine was instructed in telegram No. 12 of July 27 to Constantinople (cf. No. 7, note 3) to repeat in general terms the substance of Sir J. Simon's statement of July 13 in the House of Commons concerning the pact (see 292 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 691-700), and to express appreciation of the Turkish Government's labours in the cause of peace.

<sup>3</sup> For Anglo-French conversations held in London on July 9 and 10, 1934, see Volume VI, Nos. 487-9. M. Barthou was the French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

## No. 12

*Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen<sup>1</sup> (Riga) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 14)*  
*No. 348 [C 5542/247/18]*

RIGA, August 10, 1934

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 318 of July 25th<sup>2</sup> regarding the attitude of the Baltic States to the proposed Eastern Mutual Guarantee Pact, I have the honour to report that the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, having now returned from a visit to Moscow which followed closely on Monsieur Seljamaa's,<sup>3</sup> declared to the Press on August 1st that he had found the views of the Moscow and Kovno Governments to be in close accord on all questions of foreign policy discussed. According to the 'Jaunakas Sinas' of Riga,

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Minister at Riga, Tallinn, and Kovno.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

<sup>3</sup> Estonian Minister for Foreign Affairs.



Monsieur Lozareitis went on to say that if the Pact were concluded the position in Eastern Europe would, in his opinion, considerably improve and some irresponsible elements could no more dream of 'Drang nach Osten'.

2. Lithuania would no doubt—said Monsieur Lozareitis—take part in the negotiations for the drafting of the pact. Relations between Lithuania and the U.S.S.R. had been considerably strengthened.

3. My French colleague in Riga informed me not long ago that, as the result of a conversation with the Lithuanian Chargé d'Affaires in Riga, he had formed the impression that the Lithuanian Government, imagining their acceptance of the Pact to be essential to its realization, expected to be accorded an important part in its drafting. The Lithuanian Chargé d'Affaires had mentioned the Vilna difficulty<sup>4</sup> to Monsieur Tripier, who had replied that, as far as he knew, there had up to that time been no mention of territorial matters in connection with the Pact and that in any case it would not be difficult to devise a formula.

I have, &c.,

H. M. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN

<sup>4</sup> A reference presumably to Lithuania's continuing feud with Poland over the incorporation in March 1922 of the Vilna Corridor into the Polish Republic. Cf. S. Wambaugh, *Plebiscites since the World War* (Washington, 1933), vol. 1, pp. 547-56.

### No. 13

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 11, 7.30 p.m.)*

*No. 98 Telegraphic: by telephone [R 4495/37/3]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, August 11, 1934

Your telegram No. 72 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me that while they agree in principle they are somewhat apprehensive lest action proposed might be construed as interference in Austrian internal affairs. After reflection they have now drafted a telegram which they would be prepared to send to their representative at Rome provided you agree to send precisely similar instructions to His Majesty's representative there.

They are anxious that if you agree, these instructions should be despatched without delay and have requested me to obtain your answer if possible tomorrow.

Translation of text of draft French instructions is contained in my immediately following telegram.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 9.

<sup>2</sup> No. 14.

**No. 14**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 11, 7.30 p.m.)*

*No. 99 Telegraphic: by telephone [R 4496/37/3]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, August 11, 1934

Following is text referred to in my immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

According to information received in London the position of the Schuschnigg Cabinet would be strengthened if it were to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards the moderate socialists for example if it were to liberate the former Burgomaster Seitz, and also towards those other sections of the population which condemn attempts at outside interference aimed against Austria and the excessive Nazi propaganda.

The French Government has always held that it could not support the Government of Vienna either politically or economically unless the latter corresponded as widely as possible to the wishes of the greater part of the population and of all those desiring to maintain Austrian independence. It has consequently always been guided by international considerations without interfering in internal politics.

It has been suggested to us that instructions should be sent simultaneously to the two Embassies at Rome to enquire whether the Italian Government would agree to the Ministers of the three countries at Vienna informing Chancellor Schuschnigg semi-officially of the sympathetic interest with which Paris, London and Rome would view every attempt on his part to secure the support of all those elements of the population which disapprove of the violence of Nazi propaganda and which are attached to the defence of Austrian independence.

I approve of the démarche suggested above. Please communicate with your British colleague and make representations on similar lines to Signor Suvich.

<sup>1</sup> No. 13.

**No. 15**

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 11, 9.50 p.m.)*

*No. 231 Telegraphic [R 4497/37/3]*

ROME, August 11, 1934, 7.50 p.m.

Vienna telegram No. 20 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

In conversation with Signor Suvich this morning I enquired what he thought of possibility of consolidating Austrian Government by conciliating pan-Germans on the one hand and moderate socialists on the other hand. He replied he was in favour of attempt to conciliate the masses of the socialists by a policy of moderation and appeasement. He considered however that

<sup>1</sup> Volume VI, No. 563.

to admit any socialist leaders into the Government would be a fatal mistake. As regards pan-Germans he was not unhopeful of Government succeeding in winning at least some of them over by degrees.

He told me that Prince Starhemberg<sup>2</sup> was arriving in Rome today nominally to visit Austrian boy scouts encamped at Ostia but that he would of course be received by the head of the Government<sup>3</sup> and Signor Suvich himself. I said I hoped opportunity would be taken of inculcating moderation. Signor Suvich replied that Prince Starhemberg was really very reasonable and level headed and he had every confidence in his good sense.

For the moment things seemed to be going fairly satisfactorily in Austria and he thought Austrian Government might be allowed time to consolidate their position gradually. So far he thought they were doing well.

I alluded to the violent articles in 'Messag[g]ero' about Yugoslavia (see my despatch No. 723).<sup>4</sup> Signor Suvich said that its violence was only to be expected in view of insulting and defamatory articles which had been published in Yugoslavia about imminent collapse of fascism in Italy on wholly ridiculous ground that arrest and punishment of Arpinati (see my despatch No. 704)<sup>5</sup> betokened complete break-up of régime. I said I hoped anything in the nature of a press campaign would be prevented and Signor Suvich told me he had already taken steps to see that further press comments should be restrained.

<sup>2</sup> Austrian Vice-Chancellor; cf. No. 9, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Signor Mussolini.

<sup>4</sup> In this despatch (received August 14, not printed) Mr. Murray reported that the 'Messaggero' of August 10 had printed 'a reproduction of a map of "the Great Germany of 1935" including within the German borders not only Vienna, but also Prague, Brussels, Amsterdam, Berne, Strasburg, Trento and Trieste' and had suggested Yugoslav complicity in Nazi ambitions 'as was shown by the assistance given to Nazi terrorism in Austria, the cordial reception accorded to Austrian Nazi refugees after the failure of the *coup* of July 25th, and, above all, the mobilisation of armed forces on the border of Carinthia to counter-balance Italy's action'.

<sup>5</sup> In this despatch (received August 14, not printed) Mr. Murray reported the publication in the Italian press of August 3 of a statement by the Secretariat of the Fascist Party to the effect that 18 members of the Bologna branch had been expelled by the Party for having sided with Signor Arpinati, who had been arrested on July 25 'for action notoriously contrary to its principles'. Signor Arpinati, described by Mr. Murray as one of the founders of modern fascism, had been Under-Secretary at the Italian Ministry of the Interior from 1929 to 1933.

## No. 16

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 11, 9.50 p.m.)*

*No. 232 Telegraphic [C 5508/247/18]*

*ROME, August 11, 1934, 7.50 p.m.*

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

I asked Signor Suvich this morning whether he thought the presence of Litvinov at Berlin<sup>2</sup> might serve to expedite German reply to proposal for an

<sup>1</sup> No. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 18 below.

Eastern Pact of Mutual Assistance. He said that though Litvinov had gone there primarily to undergo treatment he had little doubt he would seize the opportunity to discuss the Pact. He understood that Polish Government had now returned a non committal but not unfavourable reply regarding Pact to French Government.<sup>3</sup> I said that His Majesty's Government attached importance to progress being made without unnecessary delay and he said such was also the view of the Italian Government.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 30 below.

## No. 17

*Record by Mr. Carr<sup>1</sup> of a conversation with M. Cambon<sup>2</sup>*

[R 4568/37/3]

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 11, 1934

The French Chargé d'Affaires called this morning and read me a despatch which he had received from Paris. The despatch began by saying that the French Government had noted with interest, and shared the regrets expressed by Sir R. Vansittart to M. Cambon in the course of a conversation on August 7th,<sup>3</sup> that the Austrian Government had not seen fit to attach any conditions to their *agrément* of Herr von Papen's appointment at Vienna, though they understood that the motive of the Austrians had been to avoid anything which would place Herr von Papen in an exceptional position.

On the other hand they regretted our refusal to accept their proposal for a consultative committee at Rome,<sup>4</sup> not so much because the proposal had any great practical value in itself, but because the refusal seemed to indicate a certain inclination on our part to disinterest ourselves in the Austrian question. The French Government felt that the present Austrian Government could not maintain itself unless it felt that it had foreign support, and it was therefore of importance that the Governments which were interested in the maintenance of Austrian independence should not appear to take too detached an attitude.

He was instructed to put these considerations to the Secretary of State.

The despatch was long and vaguely worded, and when he had finished reading it I asked M. Cambon if I should sum it up correctly by saying that

<sup>1</sup> Mr. E. H. Carr, a member of the Southern Department of the Foreign Office, was Assistant Adviser on League of Nations Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> Counsellor of the French Embassy in London and acting Chargé d'Affaires.

<sup>3</sup> No record of this conversation with M. Cambon has been traced in Foreign Office archives, but in a minute of August 7 recording his interview that day with Baron Franckenstein, Sir R. Vansittart wrote: '... I mentioned to the Austrian Minister that I learned that his Government had now given their *agrément* to Herr von Papen without attaching any conditions. I thought they had missed a considerable opportunity in so doing, and an opportunity which might not easily recur.'

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 9.

the French Government had no concrete proposal to make, but wanted us to keep up our interest in the Austrian question. He agreed that that was the gist of the despatch.

I said that if we had rejected the proposal for a committee at Rome, it was not because we had lost interest in the Austrian question, or because we did not fully share their views as to the importance of close and full consultation, but simply because we did not see any point in establishing new machinery where adequate machinery already existed, and that we were a little afraid of the possible reactions on public opinion of the constitution of a committee. Far from resting on our oars, we were constantly preoccupied with the Austrian situation and had last night sent a long telegram instructing Mr. Campbell to discuss certain suggestions with the Quai d'Orsay. I then read to M. Cambon part of our telegram to Paris No. 72,<sup>5</sup> and said that it constituted a reply to his démarche to this extent, that it showed both that we were following the Austrian question very closely and that we were carrying out in a most practical way a policy of close consultation with the French Government.

He said he was sure that the French Government would appreciate this and would give our suggestions very careful consideration.

E. H. CARR

<sup>5</sup> No. 9.

## No. 18

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon*

*(Received August 13, 10.50 a.m.)*

*No. 110 Telegraphic [C 5532/247/18]*

MOSCOW, August 13, 1934, 11.4 a.m.

My telegram No. 107.<sup>1</sup>

Although Monsieur Litvinov intimated his departure for the south of Russia and this was even announced in the press it seems he went to Berlin. This may be for the purpose of consulting a doctor. Nevertheless it is arousing considerable speculation in diplomatic circles as there is an impression that if Eastern Pact fails owing to opposition of Berlin and Warsaw Monsieur Litvinov may have in mind to suggest to Germany that it is open to her to adhere to proposed Franco-Soviet pact.<sup>2</sup>

It is not known how far, if at all, such an idea has developed or whether Monsieur Litvinov has consulted the French at all as to such a tripartite pact.

<sup>1</sup> Volume VI, No. 562.

<sup>2</sup> Berlin telegram No. 228 of even date, received at 6.30 p.m., reported on the other hand a semi-official press statement that M. Litvinov passed through Berlin on August 9 on his way via Paris to take a cure in the south of France, and that his visit to Berlin had no official character.

But there certainly is in Soviet councils a faction (military authorities) which wishes an improvement in present bad relations with Germany and is opposed to any alliance with France dictated (sic)<sup>3</sup> against Germany.

In view of Monsieur Litvinov's remark reported in my telegram No. 108<sup>4</sup> we should be faced by a new situation if Eastern Pact should come to nothing.

Repeated to Berlin and Paris.

<sup>3</sup> This word is in the original filed copy of the telegram.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 2.

## No. 19

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 13, 5.45 p.m.)*

*No. 100 Telegraphic: by telephone [R 4521/37/3]*

PARIS, August 13, 1934

I have discussed with Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in the light of your observations received by telephone, text of draft instructions to French Chargé d'Affaires at Rome forwarded in my telegram No. 99.<sup>1</sup>

Revised draft<sup>2</sup> appears to meet your point[?s], and I should be grateful to be informed as soon as possible whether you are ready to follow it in instructions to be sent to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Rome. On hearing from you to that effect Ministry will despatch their telegram forthwith.

<sup>1</sup> No. 14. In a minute of August 13 Sir R. Vansittart had asked for the Paris Embassy to be informed before 11.30 [?a.m.] of his concurrence in the text of the draft, subject to the following amendments:—(a) in 1st paragraph, the omission of reference to Herr Seitz, who had been transferred to hospital under police surveillance; (b) rewording of 2nd paragraph which seemed 'to have a slightly minatory, and anyhow a somewhat discouraging, ring' and was 'not quite accurate, for we shd. both of us in reality continue to support the Austrian Govt., even if it were not wise enough to broaden its base'; (c) rewording of beginning of 3rd paragraph to avoid giving the impression that H.M.G. made the suggestion and the French Government followed.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 20 below.

## No. 20

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 13, 5.45 p.m.)*

*No. 101 Telegraphic: by telephone [R 4522/37/3]*

PARIS, August 13, 1934

Following is text referred to in my immediately preceding telegram:<sup>1</sup>

'Les informations recueillies sur les chances de succès de l'action poursuivie à Vienne contre les menées nazistes tendent à établir que l'autorité du

<sup>1</sup> No. 19.

Cabinet Schuschnigg serait fortifiée s'il adoptait à l'intérieur une attitude plus conciliante à l'égard des Socialistes modérés aussi bien que des autres parties de la population, qui condamnent les entreprises exercées au dehors contre l'Autriche et la violence de la propagande naziste.

'Les Cabinets de Londres et de Paris se sont préoccupés de cette situation de fait, et sans vouloir intervenir dans la politique intérieure de l'Autriche, s'inspirant seulement du point de vue international qui a justifié la déclaration Anglo-Franco-Italienne du 17 février, ils se sont trouvés d'accord pour estimer que les conditions de la lutte pour le maintien de l'indépen[d]ance autrichienne seraient d'autant plus améliorées que le Gouvernement de Vienne s'assurerait moralement un caractère plus largement représentatif en répondant aux vœux de la plus grande partie de la population et de tous ceux qui désirent maintenir l'indépendance de l'Autriche.

'Les dits Gouvernements sont donc convenus de s'assurer de l'accord du Gouvernement Italien pour que les Ministres des trois pays à Vienne fassent part officiellement au Chancelier [*sic*] Schuschnigg de l'intérêt que prennent Paris, Londres et Rome à concilier tous les éléments de la population qui réprouvent les violences de la propagande Nationale-Socialiste et sont attachés à la défense [*sic*] de l'indépendance autrichienne.

'Veuillez vous mettre en rapport avec votre Collègue britannique, et intervenez comme lui auprès de M. Suvich.'

Repeated to Rome as No. 259.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In his immediately preceding telegram, No. 258 of August 13 to Rome, Sir J. Simon instructed Mr. Murray, after concerting with his French colleague, to make a démarche to Signor Suvich on lines similar to those set out in telegram No. 259.

## No. 21

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 14)*

*No. 232 Saving: Telegraphic [C 5538/247/18]*

PARIS, August 13, 1934

I learn from Ministry for Foreign Affairs that Roumanian Government appealed to Czechoslovakia to support its application to participate in proposed Eastern guarantee pact. Dr. Benes<sup>1</sup> replied that he could not by doing so incur risk of rendering negotiations more complicated and consequently more difficult.

Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs.

**No. 22**

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 14, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 236 Telegraphic [R 4527/37/3]*

*Important*

ROME, August 14, 1934, 12.10 a.m.

Your telegram No. 72 Saving Paris.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of Signor Suvich's remarks reported in my telegram 231<sup>2</sup> Signor Mussolini might be willing to advise Herr Schuschnigg when they meet next week (see my telegram 234)<sup>3</sup> to pursue policy of moderation designed to win over as many pan-Germans as possible and conciliate mass of Socialists without however admitting any of latter leaders to positions in the government.

If Signor Mussolini would agree to give such advice, His Majesty's Minister at Vienna and his French colleague could urge Austrian Government to be guided by it and effect would be given to Sir W. Selby's recommendations.

Signor Mussolini has left Rome and will not return before Schuschnigg meeting and I venture to suggest the above procedure as being one over which Italians are least likely to make difficulties.

Repeated to Paris and Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> No. 9.

<sup>2</sup> No. 15.

<sup>3</sup> In this telegram of August 13, not printed, Mr. Murray reported Signor Suvich as saying that the meeting had been arranged for August 21.

**No. 23**

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Newton (Berlin)*  
*No. 163 Telegraphic [C 5562/90/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 14, 1934, 1.20 p.m.

You should at once present to the German Government a note regarding commercial debts on the lines of the draft in my immediately following telegram.<sup>1</sup> In presenting this note you may indicate that His Majesty's Government will be willing to receive a representative of the German Government for the purpose of discussing proposals for the liquidation of the debts, if it is thought that a prompt settlement would be in any way facilitated thereby.

<sup>1</sup> No. 24.



No. 24

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Newton (Berlin)*

*No. 164 Telegraphic [C 5562/90/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 14, 1934, 2.30 p.m.*

Following is draft mentioned in my immediately preceding telegram:—<sup>1</sup>

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom desire to remind the German Government of the terms of the letter addressed by Sir Frederick Leith-Ross<sup>2</sup> to Dr. Berger on the occasion of the signing of the Anglo-German Transfer Agreement of the 4th July,<sup>3</sup> in which the following passage occurs:—

'In this connexion there is a further urgent question affecting the trade between the two countries. My Government is receiving an increasing volume of complaints that payments due from Germany for goods actually delivered have recently not been duly met. These complaints seem to have arisen more particularly out of the recent decision to reduce the allocation of foreign exchange to German importers to such amount as is daily received by the Reichsbank. I trust that the German Government will be able within a few days to remedy this unfortunate situation, which must otherwise have serious effects on the trading relations and credit possibilities of Germany; and my Government suggests that the opportunity of the aforesaid negotiations "(for an Exchange Agreement for commercial payment)"<sup>4</sup> should be taken to try and clear up the position as regards these outstanding claims of British exporters.'

His Majesty's Government have learnt with great regret that the German Government have not hitherto made any concrete proposals for dealing with this situation. They cannot regard as in any degree satisfactory the suggestion that allocations of foreign exchange to German exporters on the present restricted scale will suffice gradually to discharge these accumulated debts, the volume of which is such that the amounts becoming available from this source, after current needs have been met, would be derisory. Nor can His Majesty's Government accept as valid the argument that the resources of the Reichsbank are insufficient to permit of a firm undertaking being given to set aside sufficient foreign exchange to extinguish all such liabilities within a reasonably short space of time. The amount required is small in relation to the volume of the sterling accruing to Germany from exports to the United Kingdom, which still continue to increase.

<sup>1</sup> No. 23. The first draft of the note to be presented to the German Government had been prepared in the Board of Trade. It was revised in the Foreign Office after Sir R. Vansittart had decided that he could not 'address such a high-pitched note to any foreign Govt. without a Cabinet approval'. The Board of Trade and the Treasury agreed 'though rather reluctantly' to the suggested modifications.

<sup>2</sup> Chief Economic Adviser to His Majesty's Government.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of this Agreement and the Exchange of Letters on July 4, 1934, see Cmd. 4640 of 1934. Cf. Volume VI, No. 469, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 8.

While, however, the volume of outstanding indebtedness cannot be represented as excessive in relation to the volume of Anglo-German trade, its existence imposes a severe and inequitable burden on British exporters on whom Germany has been accustomed to rely for the supply of essential materials for her industries. These debts in fact represent the actual value of merchandise delivered to Germany, and His Majesty's Government cannot but consider the present attitude of the German Government to be wholly unjustifiable. His Majesty's Government must draw the attention of the German Government to the lasting damage to the standing of German credit in the United Kingdom which the continuance of this default must inevitably produce and to the regrettable effect upon Anglo-German relations if important interests and sections of public opinion in this country are antagonised by the absence of effort on the part of the German Government to meet unquestioned obligations.

His Majesty's Government for their part remain anxious to act in the spirit of the declaration, to which their authorised representatives and those of the German Government set their hands as recently as the 4th July last, to the effect that 'it is the earnest desire of both Governments that the trade and financial relations between the two countries should continue on a non-discriminatory and most friendly basis and that the volume of mutual trade should be maintained and as far as possible increased'.<sup>5</sup>

In the light of this declaration His Majesty's Government are reluctant to believe that it is the desire of the German Government to hazard permanent interests of the highest importance to the whole commercial community of Germany by a refusal to allow their nationals to pay for goods delivered.

His Majesty's Government, therefore, look to the German Government to formulate proposals without delay for the speedy and satisfactory liquidation of the liabilities which are the subject of this Note.

<sup>5</sup> See Cmd. 4640, paragraph 8.

## No. 25

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 15, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 238 Telegraphic [R 4567/37/3]*

*Important*

ROME, August 14, 1934, 11.45 p.m.

Your telegram No. 258.<sup>1</sup>

I made oral communication to Signor Suvich this evening in the sense of your telegram No. 259.<sup>2</sup> After unofficial telephone conversation with your department<sup>3</sup> I concluded communication proper by saying if as I hoped Italian government were in agreement with proposal it was a question where and when unofficial communication to Herr Schuschnigg could best be

<sup>1</sup> See No. 20, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 20.

<sup>3</sup> No record of this conversation has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

made. At this point I said that His Majesty's Government thought communication might be made through the three Ministers at Vienna. As I expected, Signor Suvich at once said that in view of Austrian Chancellor's visit to Signor Mussolini next week the latter would probably prefer to convey advice himself. I said in that case British and French Ministers at Vienna could back it upon Herr Schuschnigg's return there.

Signor Suvich then said that we must be quite clear as to advice we meant to give. The various forces in Austria were in a very delicate and indeed unstable condition of equilibrium. He agreed that Austrian government could not strengthen their position by mere policy of repression. On the other hand anything which would be interpreted as weakness would be fatal. He agreed that their best chance of consolidating their position was to move towards masses of population and to pursue policy of conciliation but, he observed with emphasis, were it to be even rumoured that they were making an agreement with socialists that would be the end, for Heimwehr,<sup>4</sup> army and police would promptly go over to the Nazis.

I said that if I had understood him aright he was in favour of advising Herr Schuschnigg to pursue a firm but conciliatory policy designed to win support of both moderate socialists and patriotic Pan-Germans but that there must be nothing in the nature of an agreement with the socialist leaders. Signor Suvich said that this represented his view. He would have to refer proposal to the head of the government and would let me know his decision. I said that if as I greatly hoped Signor Mussolini would be prepared to advise the Chancellor in the sense desired by His Majesty's Government and the French government it was essential to know exactly the advice which he ultimately gave so that British and French representatives at Vienna could support it effectively.

My French colleague has received his instructions and will make similar representations.

Repeated to Paris, No. 73 Saving, and to Vienna, No. 11 Saving, of August 16, 1934.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. the 'home defence force', a para-military organization of anti-Marxist and increasingly pro-Fascist sympathies. Cf. Volume VI, No. 293.

## No. 26

*Sir E. Ovey<sup>1</sup> (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 20)*

*No. 445 [C 5681/3279/4]*

BRUSSELS, August 14, 1934

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 423<sup>2</sup> of August 2nd regarding Anglo-Belgian relations, I have the honour to report that an interesting article

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Ambassador at Brussels.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

appeared in today's 'Le XXe Siècle' entitled 'L'Opinion Britannique et la Sécurité Belge'.

2. 'Le XXe Siècle' (catholic) had been criticised by the 'Nation Belge' (nationalist and pro-French) for receiving with too much enthusiasm your recent statement<sup>3</sup> and that of the Lord President of the Council<sup>4</sup> concerning British interests on the Continent, and also for attributing these statements to the attitude of independence from France which had been adopted by the Belgian Government since Monsieur de Broqueville's notorious pronouncement on disarmament last March.<sup>5</sup>

3. The writer of this article retorts that there can be no doubt that a change has come about in English opinion, and quotes as further remarkable evidence of that change Sir Herbert Samuel's recent statement regarding British responsibilities on the Continent.<sup>6</sup> He maintains that while this change is in part due to the fact that Belgian foreign policy has never become subservient to that of France, it is attributable far more to a better appreciation of what conforms best to Great Britain's own interests.

4. The writer concludes by saying that had British diplomacy been logical Belgium might well already have received the specific guarantees she desired.<sup>7</sup> But though possibly deficient in logic His Majesty's Government were well able to see what was to their advantage, and it was to be hoped that Belgian diplomacy would soon bring them to 'a more precise and realist conception of their own interests'.

I have, &c.,  
(for the Ambassador)  
NEVILLE BLAND<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to Sir J. Simon's speech in the House of Commons on July 13 which included the following passage: 'Of course, the integrity of the territory of Belgium is no less vital to the interests and safety of this country to-day than it has been in times past. It is a geographical fact which nothing can change. Indeed, changed conditions, especially in connection with the air, have not altered that historic fact at all; they have only served to emphasise it. That is the point of view of our own national security. But here again it is the mutual character of the original agreement signed at Locarno, dealing among other things with the frontiers between Belgium and Germany, which constitutes its essential feature and makes it so valuable a guarantee of European security as a whole. His Majesty's Government cannot but think—I hope the House and the country will agree—that an extension of this system of assurances, so long as they are mutual in expression and reciprocal in intention, should make for the strengthening of the foundations of peace and the restoration of confidence in Europe.' See 292 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 698.

<sup>4</sup> The reference is to Mr. Baldwin's statement in the House of Commons on July 30 which included the remark (see *ibid.*, col. 2339): 'When you think of the defence of England you no longer think of the chalk cliffs of Dover; you think of the Rhine. That is where our frontier lies.' Cf. Volume VI, No. 547.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, No. 334, for the Belgian Prime Minister's declaration in the Senate on March 6, 1934, on the foreign political situation.

<sup>6</sup> Sir H. Samuel, Member of Parliament for Darwen and Leader of the Liberal party, had stated in the House of Commons on July 13: 'We realise that a policy of isolation is not a possible one . . . I believe that this country would be prepared to support, even at considerable risk, a world system of control over international affairs designed to maintain peace and to prevent war, but it must be a world system.' See 292 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 680–1.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. No. 64 below, note 1.

<sup>8</sup> Counsellor in H.M. Embassy, Brussels.

No. 27

*Mr. Newton (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 15, 6.10 p.m.)*  
*No. 229 Telegraphic [C 5584/90/18]*

BERLIN, August 15, 1934, 4.55 p.m.

Your telegram No. 163.<sup>1</sup>

I have presented note accordingly to Herr Dieckhoff<sup>2</sup> this morning and made verbal intimation as authorised. He promised that this important communication would receive prompt and serious attention and an early reply.

*Confidential*

As regards reference to estrangement of public opinion Doctor Dieckhoff observed that this would carry more weight if British press were not already so hostile that they could hardly be more so. He said it was unfortunately not so much a question of what the German Government desired to do but rather of what it lay in their power to do. I therefore pointed out that Doctor Schacht had some time ago declared that Germany could only pay countries which took her goods. We did take her goods and yet were neither being paid nor given any sign of serious effort to pay.

<sup>1</sup> No. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Director of Department III of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, pp. 318-20.

No. 28

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Murray (Rome)*  
*No. 261 Telegraphic [R 4567/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 16, 1934, 7 p.m.

Your telegram No. 238.<sup>1</sup>

The following comments are strictly and only for your personal information and guidance.

Your telegram gives rises to some misgiving<sup>2</sup> whether there may not be a latent but fundamental difference between the views of His Majesty's Government and of the Italian Government. This, of course, would not surprise me, and I have indeed somewhat anticipated it.

The Italian Government count on the Heimwehr, who are bitterly anti-Socialist, as the main instrument for the preservation of Austrian independence. If this is so, they must be committed to an anti-Socialist policy, and this may make a policy of clemency and conciliation towards the Socialist leaders difficult if not impossible in practice. The policy of conciliation towards the masses of the population, which the Italian Government

<sup>1</sup> No. 25.

<sup>2</sup> A printed text of this telegram here reads: 'Your telegram gives rise to some misgivings.'

advocate, may turn out to be no concession to the Socialists at all, but merely a continuance of the present policy of trying to win or push the masses over from the Socialist party into the Patriotic Front.

His Majesty's Government, on the other hand, and so far as we know the French Government, believe that the Heimwehr are a mercenary force of doubtful loyalty and small military value, and that, since they are cordially disliked by the army and enjoy no popular support in the country, they are likely in the long run to discredit rather than to uphold the cause of Austrian independence. We think that the Austrian Government would really be better advised to rely on the loyalty of the army, which has hitherto performed its duties effectively, and on a wider measure of popular support, which can only be secured by measures calculated to conciliate both the Socialists and the Nationalists.

It seems useless for us to say anything further until Signor Mussolini has pronounced himself, but the above reflections lend point to your remark that it is essential to know exactly what advice Signor Mussolini contemplates. There should be no misunderstanding on this point, and when we know, it will be seen whether the foregoing misgiving is justified and whether sufficient of our original idea is left to be of any real effect.

So far as the method of communication to the Austrian Government is concerned, I should be quite prepared to fall in with a proposal that it should be made in the first instance by Signor Mussolini to the Chancellor, and repeated by the French and British Ministers in Vienna.

Repeated to Paris, No. 73 Saving, and Vienna, No. 12 Saving.

## No. 29

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 17, 9.25 p.m.)*

*No. 243 Telegraphic [R 4610/37/3]*

*Confidential*

ROME, August 17, 1934, 7.50 p.m.

Your telegram No. 261.<sup>1</sup>

My French colleague has told me in strict confidence that after receipt of his conversation with Signor Suvich his Government instructed him to let Italian Government know that their representations (your telegram No. 259)<sup>2</sup> were not intended to suggest the desirability of admitting any socialist leaders into Austrian Government. The French Government would regard any such suggestion as unwarrantable interference in internal affairs of Austria and they were determined not to create the impression of taking sides in Austrian party politics.<sup>3</sup>

Repeated to Paris and Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> No. 28.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. No. 20.

<sup>3</sup> In a minute Sir R. Vansittart commented on this sentence: 'This is also what the Italian Govt. profess to say (see No. 245 [i.e. No. 34 below]). So we *ought* to understand each other!!'

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 18)*

*No. 233 Saving: Telegraphic [C 5615/247/18]*

PARIS, August 17, 1934

I asked Secretary-General of Ministry for Foreign Affairs this morning whether any progress had been made in overcoming Polish objections to proposed Eastern pact of mutual assistance.<sup>1</sup>

2. M. Léger replied that the French Government had been trying to induce the Polish Government to indicate how soon their study would be complete and their answer might be expected. French Government, I would remember, had originally insisted that they must have an answer in good time before the meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations.<sup>2</sup> Not satisfied with Monsieur Beck's reply, they had been pressing him further, but he continued to allege the length of time required for study of issues involved, difficulties of the holiday season, etc., as reasons for delay. Utmost French Government had been able to obtain was a promise to endeavour to reply by the end of August or the beginning of September.

3. Monsieur Léger's impression is that reply will be intentionally delayed until it is too late, in view of further necessary preparation (exchange of views with Germany, drafting of text, etc.) to take advantage of presence in Geneva of representatives of all the Powers concerned to bring the negotiations to an issue.

4. He thinks that the Polish Government, foiled in their attempts to set the Baltic States against the pact and to obscure the issue by inciting Roumania to insist on participating, will continue to temporise in the hope that something else will turn up. In the meantime he has reason to believe that they are studying the possibilities of putting forward some counter-proposal of their own of the nature of which he is as yet ignorant.

5. Monsieur Beck has not hitherto gone beyond stating that he has not expressed an adverse opinion and that he will preserve an open mind until study is complete. Italian Government's information (see Rome telegram No. 232<sup>3</sup> of August 11) would seem therefore to be rather too optimistic.

6. I think French Government will continue to work on Polish Government whom they are in a position to squeeze whereas they have no means of exerting pressure on German Government who they think however will find it difficult to stand out if Poland can be induced to come in.

Repeated to Berlin, Rome, Warsaw, Prague and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The 15th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations was to open in Geneva on September 10, 1934.

<sup>3</sup> No. 16.

### No. 31

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 18)*

*No. 234 Saving: Telegraphic [R 4611/37/3]*

PARIS, August 17, 1934

I found M. Léger this morning somewhat preoccupied with the turn which events are taking in the matter of the advice to be given to the Austrian government. He fears that in the short time still available before Herr Schuschnigg's visit to Italy it will be difficult to obtain agreement among the three Powers on the nature of the advice to be tendered, and that in the circumstances Signor Mussolini may be tempted to give counsels on his own which, whilst more palatable to the Austrian government, will have the effect of dividing the unity between the three Powers which, in French eyes, was the principal advantage of your proposal.

2. It was most desirable, he said, to establish that unity in order to enable the French government to restrain the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav governments which were liable to become dangerously over-excited if they thought Signor Mussolini was playing a lone, and to their mind consequently suspicious, hand.

Repeated to Rome and Vienna.

### No. 32

*Note by Mr. Jebb<sup>1</sup> of a conversation with Signor Quaroni<sup>2</sup> on the proposed Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee*

*[C 5708/247/18]*

ROME, August 17, 1934

I asked Signor Quaroni what his views in regard to this question were. He replied that he did not personally think either the Russians or the French, but more particularly the French, had ever really seriously believed in the possibility of the Pact materialising, to the extent at any rate of incorporating Germany and Poland. Moreover, all the present indications were that Germany and Poland would refuse to look at it. This was of course a great pity and yet another instance of how stupid the Germans were. Cleverer men in power in Germany would have jumped at it as a means of avoiding the threatened Franco-Russian alliance. He did not think that the German opposition to the scheme lay entirely in Herr Hitler, though no doubt he had vague *a priori* objections to dealing with the Bolsheviks. Herr von Neurath<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. H. M. Gladwyn Jebb was Second Secretary in H.M. Embassy at Rome. This note was enclosed in a letter of August 17, not printed, from Mr. Murray (Rome) to Mr. Carr.

<sup>2</sup> Head of the European Department in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>3</sup> Baron K. von Neurath was Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs.



and Herr von Bülow<sup>4</sup> were, in Signor Quaroni's opinion, just as much to blame; and he wondered whether in the past we had not all formed too high an opinion of the real ability of these two gentlemen.

What the French had recently had in mind, he thought, was the necessity of making a deal with Russia. They knew that this would alienate Poland, but thought that in the long run the Poles would be forced to come in in some way or other. If his information was correct, the French had been alarmed by reports that the Reichswehr, undeterred by the violently anti-Russian policy of their own Government, had all along been keeping in close touch with the Russian General Staff, and that as a result of recent events the Reichswehr were in a better position to exert their influence than in the past. In fact, if they (the French) did not bring off their alliance fairly quickly there might be the possibility of a change of front in Germany, with the result that the Russians would cover their rear by an agreement with Berlin. After all, if this could be effected it would presumably be more in Russian interests than an agreement with France.

The great mistake of the French, concluded Signor Quaroni, seemed to him to be in their relying at all on the validity of Russian engagements. Did anybody really think that if France was ever attacked by Germany the Soviet Union would march? To count on the effective support of a Russian army in such conditions was to count on the possibility of receiving help from the moon!

G. J.

<sup>4</sup> Herr B. von Bülow was Secretary of State in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### No. 33

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Murray (Rome)*

*No. 264 Telegraphic [R 4611/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 18, 1934, 1.10 p.m.*

Sir G. Clerk's telegram No. 234 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

You should take first opportunity of asking Signor Suvich to let us know beforehand exactly in what sense Signor Mussolini will speak to Dr. Schuschnigg. You might say that it is obviously desirable for us to know this, in order that we may be able to instruct His Majesty's Minister to use similar language at Vienna with the minimum of delay. Is visit definitely fixed for August 21st?<sup>2</sup>

Repeated to Paris, No. 128, and Vienna, No. 61.

<sup>1</sup> No. 31.

<sup>2</sup> In Rome telegram No. 247 of August 18 Mr. Murray said that the meeting was to take place on August 21 at Florence.

No. 34

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 18, 5.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 245 Telegraphic [R 4621/37/3]*

ROME, August 18, 1934, 3.20 p.m.

My telegram No. 238.<sup>1</sup>

Director General,<sup>2</sup> in the absence of Signor Suvich who has left for manœuvres, communicated to me orally this morning Signor Mussolini's reply to representations which you instructed me to make.

Signor Mussolini was already in agreement with idea that Austrian Government, who are successors of the policy followed by the late Chancellor, would be well-advised to act in such a way as to rally to their support as many elements as possible both from moderate socialists and nationalists. He would inform Chancellor at their forthcoming meeting that this was his opinion but he could not, without interference in internal affairs of Austria, give advice to Herr Schuschnigg who as Chancellor must do as he thought right.

Head of Government was not in favour of joint action at Vienna in support of opinion which he would express. Such representations would become known and would defeat their own object.

Signor Buti added as personal gloss that if it was thought Herr Schuschnigg was acting under pressure from the three Governments this would in itself defeat our common aim which was to consolidate his position.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Signor G. Buti, Director-General of Political Affairs in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>3</sup> In the course of a minute of August 18 attached to this telegram Sir R. Vansittart remarked that the proposed Italian statement was 'more anodyne and "pious" than is really required to meet the case. This wouldn't hurt a fly.' But it was 'of no use for the French and us to go further than the Italians. . . . Moreover I took—somewhat reluctantly and only because I knew it to be the attitude of H.M.G.—something very like the attitude described in the last paragraph of Mr. Murray's tel. No. 245 in explaining to the French Govt. and to the Austrian Minister why we had not taken any initiative in attempting to attach conditions to Herr von Papen's agrément . . . as there really is *something* in the penultimate paragraph of 245—though not a great deal perhaps—I am really, as a practical person, content that Signor Mussolini should say these are the views of us all.'

No. 35

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 18, 5.20 p.m.)*  
*No. 246 Telegraphic [R 4652/37/3]*

*Immediate*  
My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

*Personal*

If you consider opinion which Signor Mussolini intends to express as adequate (and I do not think it will be possible to induce him to go further)

<sup>1</sup> No. 34.

would you wish me to suggest in speaking to Chancellor he should make it clear that his opinion is fully shared by His Majesty's Government and French Government.

Were Signor Mussolini to speak in the name of the three governments it would emphasise existence of common policy which should enable French Government to calm anxieties of Little Entente referred to in Paris telegram No. 234.<sup>2</sup>

Alternative which my French colleague has suggested to his Government would be for His Majesty's Minister and French Minister at Vienna to support unofficially and separately Signor Mussolini's opinion of the question.

<sup>2</sup> No. 31.

### No. 36

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 21)*

*No. 742 [R 4646/37/3]*

*Confidential*

ROME, August 18, 1934

Sir,

With reference to my telegram No. 239<sup>1</sup> of the 16th August, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a translation of a confidential letter from Signor Mussolini in which he asks me to transmit a personal message to you in reply to your communication of July 31st.

I have, &c.,  
JOHN MURRAY

ENCLOSURE IN No. 36

*Translation*

*Confidential*

ROME, August 16, 1934

My dear Mr. Murray,

I have to refer to and to thank you for the letter which you recently sent me conveying the communication which Sir John Simon addressed to me on the subject of Austrian affairs. In my turn I beg you to be so good as to communicate the following personal letter to Sir John Simon:

'I am sincerely grateful to Your Excellency for the personal letter which you caused the British Embassy in Rome to communicate to me. I much appreciated this courteous action and I heartily thank you for it.

'It is a matter of satisfaction to me that Italian policy in regard to Austria and my statements on the subject have been sympathetically received in responsible British circles and that the Italian and British points of view are inspired by the same purpose. It is also my opinion that the position taken up by Great Britain and Italy has, in a period of acute stress, been a factor of great importance, calculated to prevent the situation from becoming even more complicated, and to promote a general appeasement.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. It said that Signor Mussolini's reply to Sir J. Simon's private letter (see Volume VI, No. 546) had been received.

'As Your Excellency justly remarks, the co-operation of the interested Governments on the lines of the principles laid down in the declaration of the 17th February is a precious element in ensuring that the measures promptly taken by the Austrian Government and those which they may take later may have their full effect in guiding the country back to a normal state of peace. For the same purpose it is clear, as indeed you point out, that Austria is fully entitled to refuse to tolerate movements and actions directed against the constituted order, which ought rather to be fully respected by all.

'As in the past so also in the future it is my intention to keep in close touch with the British Government and with the other Governments with the objects mentioned above, and in repeating once again my thanks for the letter which Your Excellency addressed to me, I have much pleasure in conveying to you the expression of my highest consideration and my best personal wishes.'

Please accept the expression of my most distinguished consideration.

MUSSOLINI

### No. 37

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 19, 10 a.m.)*

*No. 105 Telegraphic [R 4620/37/3]*

VIENNA, August 19, 1934, 4 a.m.

Your telegram No. 61<sup>1</sup> and Paris telegram No. 234.<sup>2</sup>

I am very grateful for indication that in no circumstances will any expression of views, or rather friendly advice, be conveyed to Austrian Chancellor without full and complete agreement of the three governments beforehand, since any suggestion of disunion between the three governments as to policy or aims would obviously be quite fatal at this moment.

Repeated to Paris No. 1 and Rome No. 17.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. No. 33.

<sup>2</sup> No. 31.

### No. 38

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 129 Telegraphic: by telephone [R 4621/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 19, 1934, 5.30 p.m.

Rome telegram No. 245.<sup>1</sup>

I presume that Signor Mussolini's reply has also reached French Government.

<sup>1</sup> No. 34.

My feeling is—

- (a) That there is some force in the argument that we must avoid any semblance of pressure on the Austrian Chancellor;
- (b) That Signor Mussolini's proposed expression of opinion, though weak in form, may produce desired effect and is, in any case, the maximum to which Signor Mussolini is likely to agree;
- (c) That, if Signor Mussolini makes the proposed communication to the Chancellor, he should either make it in the name of all three Governments or else it should be subsequently repeated to the Chancellor by the British and French Ministers at Vienna.

Either course should allay the objections which the Little Entente might feel to a purely Italian *démarche*, and I should be prepared to leave to Signor Mussolini the choice between them. I should, in fact, particularly from the point of view of Italo-German relations, be inclined to prefer the former and I presume that Signor Mussolini will also prefer it. But if the French Government for any reason consider that action by the French and British Ministers at Vienna would be more advantageous, I will fall in with their view.

Please consult French Government urgently and let me have reply if possible to-morrow morning at 11 o'clock.

Repeated to Rome, No. 265, and Vienna, No. 62.

### No. 39

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 20, 11.15 a.m.)*

*No. 102 Telegraphic: by telephone [R 4633/37/3]*

PARIS, August 20, 1934

Your telegram No. 129.<sup>1</sup>

French Government agree.

They too have slight preference for first alternative but they do not like the idea of giving Signor Mussolini a mandate to speak in their name. They would rather when he uses language which he intends to hold to Austrian Chancellor he should say that he is doing so in full agreement with British and French Governments, whose opinion it also represents. They think that Signor Mussolini's remarks should be subsequently confirmed by British and French Ministers at Vienna in an unostentatious manner at first suitable opportunity.

On hearing that you agree, Minister for Foreign Affairs will immediately instruct French Chargé d'Affaires in Rome to make appropriate communication in concert with his British colleague.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 38.

<sup>2</sup> In Foreign Office telegram No. 267, of 1 p.m. on August 20, Mr. Murray was instructed to act as suggested in Paris telegram No. 102 in concert with his French colleague.

*Mr. Newton (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 24)*

*No. 998 [C 5747/20/18]*

*Most confidential*

BERLIN, August 20, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you, herewith, a copy of a memorandum by the Military Attaché to this Embassy indicating the views of the Reichswehr on certain matters, and in particular their attitude towards General Göring<sup>1</sup> and the possibility of his combining the Ministries of the Reichswehr and the Air.

I have, &c.,  
B. C. NEWTON

ENCLOSURE IN No. 40

*Colonel Thorne to Mr. Newton*

BERLIN, August 16, 1934

Mr. Newton,

I am forwarding an account of a long conversation I had with a fairly senior officer in the R.W.M. [Reichswehr-Ministerium] as he is in a responsible position and his views can be taken to represent the general opinion of the Reichswehr-Ministerium, but the conversation should be regarded as 'most confidential'.

2. My informant commenced by saying that, apropos of Mr. Baldwin's remark that the British frontier was on the Rhine,<sup>2</sup> he and all the R.W.M. realised that Great Britain disliked and was worried by the pace at which the German air force was being developed; the German M[ilitary] A[ttaché] in London had repeatedly reported to this same effect. They in the R.W.M. felt that it had been a mistake on Hitler's part originally to have allowed Göring such a free hand in the formation of a German air force, and that Hitler would be well advised to step in now and order Göring to slow his programme down considerably and in addition to decrease its offensive nature by reducing the number of bombing squadrons and substituting more fighters. The R.W.M. had realised only too well how pleasant Mr. Baldwin's remark must have sounded to French ears.

3. My informant regretted, as do all officers to whom one can talk freely, the weakness of General von Blomberg as R.W. [Reichswehr] Minister and stated how much the officers' corps in general would prefer to have Göring as R.W. Minister. He admitted that the rank and file disliked Göring, but the officers' corps as a whole realised the hostility of Goebbels<sup>3</sup> to themselves as a class and they felt that Göring as an ex-officer and of their own class (and presumably with the assistance of their expert advice) would make an excel-

<sup>1</sup> Reich Air Minister.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 26, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Reich Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda.

lent R.W. Minister and would act as a counter to any destructive tendency of Goebbels. If this solution were adopted it would be desirable that General von Blomberg should remain as the Supreme Defence Minister (Verteidigungs-Minister with his own staff), while Göring would combine the R.W. Ministry with the Air Ministry. In reply to my question, my informant said that he did not think that, apart from restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles, Göring would allow the Air Ministry to merge into the R.W. Ministry unless he personally took office as Reichswehr Minister.

I gathered that the Verteidigungs-Ministry would be of the nature of the Committee of Imperial Defence but with executive powers enabling it to give its instructions to all Ministries.

4. In discussing possible wars my informant said that they all regarded the Polish question as the one serious danger to peace. The position of the Polish Corridor problem was always one of unstable equilibrium, a satisfactory solution being almost, if not quite, impossible. The Czechoslovakian situation did not, he considered, show any danger to peace; the German minority undoubtedly wanted to come to them, but they in Germany were not prepared to resort to war on their behalf; nor would either army or nation willingly take up arms for the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine.

A. T.

#### No. 41

*Letter from Mr. Newton (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent<sup>1</sup>*

[C 5802/247/18]

BERLIN, August 21, 1934

My dear Sergo,

At lunch with me yesterday Dieckhoff took the initiative in referring to the Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee by saying that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs were busily occupied with it. He hoped that within the next ten days or a fortnight Neurath would be able to see Hitler and obtain a decision as to the Government attitude.

I said I was glad to know this, as, although it was a matter in which we were only indirectly concerned, we were, as he knew, keenly interested. I had moreover been rather wondering whether Germany, whose original reaction was so unfavourable, might not be marking time in the hope that some other country would say 'No'. Dieckhoff denied that this was the case, and said that Germany was not procrastinating nor would, he thought, return a negative answer. The principle of Regional Agreements had always been favoured by the German authorities, and they could also welcome the idea of Consultation. What they could not agree to in the original proposals was

<sup>1</sup> An Assistant Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office. The date of receipt of this letter is not recorded.

the Mutual Assistance, a method which could hardly be of practical value for them and might entail the risk of making Germany into a European battleground. It might also involve her in disputes, e.g. between Lithuania and Poland, with which she had no concern. I enquired whether, if Mutual Assistance were omitted, there would be much of substance left, and Dieckhoff admitted that this was of course the difficulty.

As the occasion was quite private and very informal, I am not reporting the foregoing by despatch, but think you might like to receive in this letter an indication of how the wind is blowing in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Yours ever,  
BASIL C. NEWTON

## No. 42

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 25, 10.30 a.m.)*

*No. 33 Saving: Telegraphic [R 4748/37/3]*

ROME, August 22, 1934

My Saving telegrams No. 31<sup>1</sup> and No. 32.<sup>2</sup>

Following points in the official declaration call for comment.

It is in the first place explained in evidently inspired articles in to-night's press that phrase 'complete internal autonomy' is directed against those Nazi agitators who desire to force an early election or plebiscite. The Austrian Government, it is stated, should have the power to hold elections whenever it seems good to them to do so, without considering any external pressure which may be put on them.

In the second place, I learn from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the reference to the 'protocols of Rome,'<sup>3</sup> whose sphere of action may be developed and extended' should be read as meaning, *inter alia*, that these protocols are still open to accession by any other Danubian State which sincerely desires to associate itself with them. Indeed Herr Schuschnigg made a declaration in this sense to an Italian journalist on his departure from Vienna.

In the third place, it seems legitimate to infer that Herr Schuschnigg's remarks regarding the possibility of re-establishing friendly Austro-German

<sup>1</sup> Of August 22, received August 25, not printed. This telegram gave an English translation of the official communiqué issued after the meeting at Florence on August 21 of Signor Mussolini and Dr. von Schuschnigg. See *The Times*, August 22, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Of August 22, received August 25, not printed. This telegram (cf. note 4 below) summarized Dr. von Schuschnigg's statement to the press on his visit to Italy. See *ibid.*, August 23, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. the Italo-Austro-Hungarian protocols (printed in translation in *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 137, pp. 291-3) concluded at Rome on March 17, 1934; cf. Volume VI, Nos. 353, 361, and 369. See also *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. ii, No. 332.



relations and his reference to the millenary German mission in the Danube Basin<sup>4</sup> are in the nature of olive branches to Germany.

<sup>4</sup> These remarks were summarized as follows in Rome telegram No. 32 Saving (see note 2 above): 'So far as Germany was concerned, all that Austria desired was to safeguard her vital interests and the "liberty of her decisions in regard to internal or external policy". If this were recognised there would vanish all difficulties in the way of a re-establishment of friendly Austro-German relations. . . . After a reference to the fundamental principles which guided the Austrian Government and were founded in part on the "Millenary German Mission" in the Danube Basin, Herr Schuschnigg concluded the declaration with an expression of thanks for his welcome in Italy.'

### No. 43

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 28)*

*No. 745 [R 4792/37/3]*

ROME, August 22, 1934

Sir,

On receipt of your telegram No. 267<sup>1</sup> of August 20th regarding the language which it was desired that Signor Mussolini should hold to Herr Schuschnigg on the following day, I at once got into touch with my French colleague who, however, did not actually receive his instructions until several hours later. It was, in fact, entirely due to the rapidity with which instructions reached me throughout the recent negotiations that it was possible to bring them to a successful issue. The Quai d'Orsay moved much more slowly; I was, for instance, in a position to show Monsieur de Dampierre his instructions as contained in your telegram No. 259<sup>2</sup> of August 13th several hours before he learned from Paris that he was likely to be called upon to take action.

2. In the absence of both the Under-Secretary and the Director General at Florence on August 20th we spoke to the Head of the European Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who was thus able to inform the Head of the Government of the views of His Majesty's Government and the French Government when, in accordance with standing instructions, he reported by telephone to Signor Mussolini at 8 p.m. In order to avoid any possible misunderstanding and, incidentally, to define the extent to which His Majesty's Government were in agreement with such opinions as Signor Mussolini might see fit to express in the course of his conversation with Herr Schuschnigg, I left with Signor Quaroni a piece of paper on which I had written the formula contained in the first sentence of the second paragraph of my telegram No. 245<sup>3</sup> of August 18th, viz: 'The Austrian Government, who are the successors of the policy followed by the late Chancellor, will be well-advised to act in such a way as to rally to their support as many elements as possible both of the moderate Socialists and the Nationalists.' (My French colleague, I may add, had already informed me that he intended to adopt a similar

<sup>1</sup> See No. 39, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. No. 20.

<sup>3</sup> No. 34.

precaution and for this purpose made a note in French of the above formula.) At the same time I expressed the hope that in holding this language Signor Mussolini would make it clear to the Austrian Chancellor that he was doing so 'in full agreement with His Majesty's Government and the French Government whose opinion it also represents'. Signor Quaroni assured me that there would not be the slightest difficulty in this respect; Signor Mussolini fully realised that the views of the three Governments in this matter were in complete harmony and he intended to make this plain to Herr Schuschnigg.

3. I took the opportunity of impressing on Signor Quaroni the importance which obviously derived not merely from the agreement of the three Governments as to the best course for the Austrian Government to follow but from the fact that His Majesty's Government and the French Government were content that, in speaking to the Austrian Chancellor, Signor Mussolini should be able to say that his opinion was shared by those two Governments. Signor Quaroni said that he appreciated this and had, indeed, been struck by the unwonted cordiality with which Monsieur de Dampierre had made his communication. When I went on to say that His Majesty's Minister at Vienna and his French colleague would take an early opportunity, on Herr Schuschnigg's return to the capital, of confirming in a friendly and unostentatious way what Signor Mussolini had said to him at Florence, Signor Quaroni, as I expected, raised no objection.

4. I believe that the readiness with which His Majesty's Government and the French Government accepted, and identified themselves with, the language which Signor Mussolini wished to hold to the Austrian Chancellor has had an excellent effect and may well make Italian collaboration easier to obtain in the future.

5. I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Representatives in Paris and Vienna.

I have, &c.,  
JOHN MURRAY

#### No. 44

*Letter from Mr. Newton (Berlin) to Mr. Baxter<sup>1</sup>*

[C 5761/20/18]

BERLIN, August 22, 1934

My dear Baxter,

My official reply to your despatch No. 924<sup>2</sup> of 16th August is limited to giving you the information for which you asked. You have not raised any

<sup>1</sup> A member of the Central Department of the Foreign Office. The date of receipt of this letter is not recorded.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Office despatch No. 924 referred to a report, communicated to the Foreign Office by the Marquis de Castellane of the French Embassy on August 9, concerning the alleged establishment at Berlin of a War School similar to the former Kriegs Akademie.

major question and I certainly don't wish to do so in such a connection so have not dealt with that aspect of your enquiry. I don't suppose there is likely to be any question of our taking up the issue of an infringement of the Treaty<sup>3</sup> and pressing it with heavy guns, and if there were any such question I imagine it would be extremely difficult to produce, in Court as it were, sufficient evidence to obtain a conviction. In any case it would be bad policy to inflict a mere pin-prick or petty humiliation on the Germans, particularly at this moment after the plebiscite<sup>4</sup> and at the season of the great Party Day at Nürnberg,<sup>5</sup> in a Reichswehr matter where they would be most sensitive as it affects their honour and their 'Gleichberechtigung'. I understand that His Majesty's Government refused to be drawn by the French into sending an officer to investigate their dossier of Treaty infractions at Paris,<sup>6</sup> and wonder whether the French are now giving us a little dig in retaliation and using for the purpose the help our Military Attaché was good enough to give theirs.

I have drawn attention in my despatch to the importance of doing nothing to jeopardise relations and contacts which have already been made delicate enough by the events of June 30th and Hitler's subsequent speech in the Reichstag.<sup>7</sup>

Yours ever,  
BASIL C. NEWTON

Mr. Newton's reply, in Berlin despatch No. 1018 of August 22, forwarded a copy of a report by Colonel Thorne, the Military Attaché, which stated that 'the courses of instruction for the "Führerstab" were being concentrated in Berlin and the W[ar] O[ffice] has been kept informed of any developments which came to my notice'.

<sup>3</sup> Of Versailles, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> In this plebiscite, which took place on August 19, Herr Hitler's action in unifying the offices of President and Chancellor (cf. No. 1, note 3) was endorsed by 38.4 million out of 45.5 million voters.

<sup>5</sup> The 6th National Socialist party rally was to be held at Nuremberg, September 4-10.

<sup>6</sup> For the records of Anglo-French conversations at Paris on February 17 and March 1, 1934, relating to disarmament, see Volume VI, Nos. 297 and 324: cf. *ibid.*, No. 363.

<sup>7</sup> On July 13, 1934; see *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, April 1922-August 1939*, edited by Norman H. Baynes (London, 1942), vol. i, pp. 290-328.

## No. 45

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 23, 4.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 252 Telegraphic [R 4685/37/3]*

ROME, August 23, 1934, 2.50 p.m.

My telegram No. 250.<sup>1</sup>

According to to-day's Messag[g]ero, Austrian Chancellor in interview with their correspondent on board steamer yesterday is reported to have said

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In this telegram of August 22 Mr. Murray reported that 'Chancellor did not in fact see any member or representative of ex-Imperial family during his journey to Genoa to-day'.

that 'it is the intention of my government and please note that I speak of intention, to perform an act of justice and restore if not all at least part of the property' lost by the Hapsburgs. The Chancellor went on to say that between this and talk of a Hapsburg restoration there lay an 'ocean of dreams, mere dreams'.

Speaking of Anschluss he said this problem had now been solved. At all costs Austria would remain independent. 'Between my country and the Reich there are no, nor can there ever be, grounds for an agreement on this subject'.

## No. 46

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 24, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 254 Telegraphic [R 4688/37/3]*

*Important*

*ROME, August 23, 1934, 5.20 p.m.*

My telegram No. 251.<sup>1</sup>

Director General informed me this morning that official communiqué (see my telegram No. 31 Saving)<sup>2</sup> correctly represented main aspects of what had passed between Signor Mussolini and Austrian Chancellor. Latter had said that politically the situation might now be regarded as stabilized. There remained however an economic and particularly a financial problem. Although fundamentally Austrian economic situation was sound, action of Germany had had most serious economic and financial repercussions. Owing to large sums which Austrian Government had had to spend in dealing with February outbreak<sup>3</sup> and combatting German propaganda, culminating in abortive putsch of last month,<sup>4</sup> they anticipate deficit in their current budget of 200 million schillings. To overcome financial difficulty, Austria would have to look to outside assistance.

When Signor Mussolini touched on possibility of Austrian Government endeavouring to consolidate their position by a policy of appeasement and conciliation the Chancellor said that he was already in sympathy with this view and mentioned his recent appointment of an Under Secretary of State (Director General did not know his official title) who had himself been a workman and to whom he intended to entrust the carrying out of a programme of important public works,<sup>5</sup> as he felt that appeasement and conciliation of political opponents could best be achieved through social rather than political methods.

As regards Austro-German relations Chancellor said that Herr von Papen had used most conciliatory language. He had promised that Austrian Legion

<sup>1</sup> Of August 22, not printed.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 42, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 9, note 3.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. the events leading to the death of Dr. Dollfuss on July 25.

<sup>5</sup> Presumably a reference to the appointment of Herr Hans Grossauer, born 1883 and by trade a blacksmith, as Under-Secretary of State for the Protection of Labour. Cf. No. 126 below.

and Inspectorate General for Austria would be dissolved. When asked whether Kampfring<sup>6</sup> would also be dissolved Herr von Papen was unable to give a definite reply and did not seem to know much about this organization or its activities. It remained to be seen whether his conciliatory language would be borne out by subsequent actions of German Government, but at any rate the flow of wireless propaganda from Munich had ceased.

The question of Habsburg restoration was not touched upon as it was not regarded as having any actuality today.

For comments see my immediately following telegram.

Repeated to Paris No. 51 and Vienna No. 35.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. the Austrian Nazis' organization in Germany. For Herr Hitler's instructions of August 19, 1934, for its conversion into 'a Relief Society concerned only with the cultural, social and economic care of its members' see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 165.

#### No. 47

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 23, 9.30 p.m.)*

*No. 255 Telegraphic [R 4686/37/3]*

*Important*

ROME, August 23, 1934, 5.20 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to Signor Mussolini and the Chancellor the only other person present at interviews of which there were two was Signor Suvich from whom Director-General had received account of what had transpired. As neither Mussolini nor Signor Suvich are returning to Rome for some time I fear nothing beyond this second-hand record of events is for the present obtainable.

I asked Director-General whether Mussolini had spoken to the Chancellor in the sense agreed upon.<sup>2</sup> Director-General said that he was sure that Mussolini had in fact spoken in this sense but that he had probably been careful to avoid laying unnecessary emphasis on fact that Great Britain, France and Italy were trying to guide Austria in the way she should go. Chancellor and his colleagues were German and it was important to avoid . . .<sup>3</sup> their German susceptibility. (My French colleague put similar question and received similar answer). I reminded the Director-General that it was the intention of His Majesty's Government and the French Government that their representative[s] at Vienna should unostentatiously and unofficially support views expressed by Mussolini to the Chancellor. Director-General said that there was no objection to this course, but he hoped that adequate regard would be had for German susceptibilities of the Austrian Government.

Director-General expressed personal opinion that this problem was now one of finance. Italian Government were going into this and as soon as they had done so would communicate their views to His Majesty's Government

<sup>1</sup> No. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Nos. 34, 38, and 39.

<sup>3</sup> The text is here uncertain.

and French Government. He was convinced Austria would have to have outside financial help, and if such help were forthcoming promptly there was every reason to hope that Austrian independence would be maintained. In the absence of financial help however he believed Austria would ultimately collapse into the arms of Germany.<sup>4</sup>

Repeated to Paris and Vienna.

\* Referring to Nos. 46 and 47 Mr. E. H. Carr wrote in a minute of August 24: 'These two telegrams are most unsatisfactory . . . two days after the event we are still fobbed off with a reference to the official press communiqué and vague suppositions.' He felt that the reference to the need for financial assistance was 'rather ominous' and that no 'loan to Austria would stand a chance in Parliament now'. He was inclined to think that 'it would be well to tell the Italians this immediately'.

## No. 48

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 27)*

*No. 173 [R 4757/37/3]*

*Confidential*

VIENNA, August 23, 1934

Sir,

The developments of the last year and a half in Austria have borne witness to the truth that without help from without there is little likelihood of reducing the controversy within Austria to dimensions which will preclude the possibility at any moment of international complications on a large scale. It is for this reason that I have welcomed the initiative of His Majesty's Government in setting out their point of view to Signor Mussolini with results which I feel must bear useful fruit. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that the meeting between Signor Mussolini and Dr. von Schuschnigg cannot by itself dispose of the 'Austrian' difficulty, and this being so it is likely that the forthcoming meeting at Geneva,<sup>1</sup> which it is the intention of Dr. von Schuschnigg to attend, may provide the occasion for a fuller discussion of a problem which has done and is doing as much to poison the atmosphere in Central Europe as almost any other single problem; thus retarding progress in the direction of some real agreement between the Great Powers, which is so essential for one and all of them if the present drift is to be arrested with all which it involves in unhappy consequences for every people of the Continent of Europe.

2. Nevertheless, for any such discussion to be productive of results, it would be necessary to establish the more important points in the Austrian situation which seem to require the attention of the Governments if an issue is to be found out of the difficulty.

3. It is with a view to indicating those points that I now venture to draw attention to certain of the more prominent factors in the Austrian situation which experience[s] of the past eighteen months have shown to lie at the root of the trouble.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 30, note 2.

### (A) *The Armed Forces*

4. A constant irritant to the executive forces of Austria—without whose loyalty no Government can survive in Austria—are the political auxiliaries (*Heimwehr*, *Ostmärkische-Sturmscharen*,<sup>2</sup> &c.), which are more and more inclined to hold the Government to ransom, although their fighting value is almost non-existent and their eventual loyalty to the Italian cause doubtful.

5. The mass of the population, and particularly the officer and under-officer class, whose value in resisting German encroachment should not be underrated, would be equally glad to be rid of the unwelcome presence of these undisciplined units, but their disbandment is impossible so long as the Christian-Social party is watching the *Heimwehr* with jealousy and distrust, and particularly so long as the bulk of them cannot be absorbed into other gainful occupations; for membership of the *Heimwehr* and *Ostmärkische-Sturmscharen* to-day means occupation to the youth of Austria at a time when opportunity for other occupation is utterly lacking.

6. A demand is also growing for the increase of the Austrian Army;<sup>3</sup> which is causing anxiety in Little Entente circles but is justified in Austria as a means of decreasing unemployment and disciplining unruly youth 'at the Nazi age'. The Army authorities are, however, finding it difficult to get short-service recruits by voluntary enlistment owing to the competition of the *Heimwehr* and *Ostmärkische-Sturmscharen*; and the system of voluntary enlistment is expensive at a time when the budget deficit is growing. Their ideal would be the MacDonald plan;<sup>4</sup> but they see no chance of its early acceptance.

7. The point, therefore, to consider is whether, in return for disbandment of the *Heimwehr* and *Ostmärkische-Sturmscharen* and permanent suppression of all other private or political armed formations, the three Governments would be prepared to allow Austria to introduce, for a trial period of five years, compulsory service, by which the Army could be made up forthwith to 60,000 men on a basis of one year with the colours and three to five years with the reserve.

8. For the first year the Government would be allowed to absorb such of the *Heimwehr* and *Ostmärkische-Sturmscharen* as are unemployed and under 25 years of age into the Army—on the above basis—in order to prevent their turning against the Government.

<sup>2</sup> For the *Heimwehr*, see No. 25, note 4. The '*Ostmärkische Sturmscharen*' was an armed formation representing Catholic and Christian Socialist elements founded by Dr. von Schuschnigg.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Volume VI, No. 556.

<sup>4</sup> A reference to the Draft Convention submitted by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to the General Commission of the Disarmament Conference on March 16, 1933, and published as Cmd. 4279 of 1933; cf. Volume IV, Appendix IV. Under those proposals Austria would have had an armed land force of not more than 50,000 effectives, with a maximum total period of 8 months' service. Modifications of this draft were suggested in His Majesty's Government memorandum of January 29, 1934, published on January 31 as Cmd. 4498; cf. Volume VI, Nos. 206 and 232. The problem of 'the so-called "para-military training", i.e. the military training outside the army of men of military age' was there recognized and the proposal made that 'such training outside the army should be prohibited'.

9. No increase would be allowed in artillery or other 'offensive' formations; it being understood that the increase was allowed solely as an internal protection against disorder and a means of disciplining the youth of the country in a manner consonant with Austria's economic difficulties.

10. Such is the present distrust in Yugoslavia of Italian use of the Heimwehr that the alternative of an increased Army with an independent Austrian outlook would probably not be altogether unacceptable in Belgrade, and might even find acceptance, on the terms indicated above, in Prague.

11. Equally would I not be without hope that Italy would—after a certain amount of preliminary objection—see her way to accept some such solution; for the Italian Legation here is increasingly emphasising the heavy cost to Italy of the support she is giving to Austria to maintain the cause of Austrian independence in her own interest and in that of Europe, of whom circumstances have in some degree constituted her the mandatory.

12. Another factor which must weigh with Italy in inducing her not to prove unduly obstructive as regards perpetuation as an independent force of her Heimwehr allies is her own increasingly difficult economic situation. According to Press figures from Rome the Italian adverse balance of trade for the first 7 months of 1934 is 1,543 million Lire (£26,000,000 approximately) as against 877 million Lire (£15,000,000 approximately) for the same period last year.

13. Italy must further know, as indicated in Paris telegram No. 234 Saving<sup>5</sup> of the 17th instant, that Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia are not in a mood to tolerate the march of Italian armed formations into Austria; with the result that if Italy is unwise enough to support Austria against Germany by force of arms the most probable result will be partition of this country among its neighbours and a common Italo-German frontier in Tyrol—with resultant Pan-German propaganda in South Tyrol and a far greater danger to Italy than exists to-day.

#### (B) *The Economic Situation*

14. The recent troubles have contributed still further to complicate the economic difficulties of Austria. It has been stated to me that the recent troubles have cost the Austrian Government as much as 80 million Schilling. What this will mean for the Austrian budget of next year requires no emphasis, seeing that reserves of all kinds will soon, to all intents and purposes, be exhausted. I shall be surprised if the financial committees of the League, who are to be called upon to examine the position in the early part of September, do not conclude that it is 'impossible' for things to go on as they are, if the economic structure of Austria is not to collapse, and if the international loans invested in Austria are not to be placed in grave jeopardy. It is more than on the cards that out of these committees will emerge the problem of what, if any, assistance is to be afforded to Austria to help her in her difficulties. So far as Austrians are concerned, more and more do they seem to take the view that if they are engaged in a struggle which concerns

<sup>5</sup> No. 31.



other countries as much as their own, those countries must realise the situation to which Austria has been reduced, and contribute their share to enable the burden to be supported. That further loans will generally be deprecated there is little room for doubt. Another means, however, of helping Austria would be the extension of her exports, of which timber constitutes the most important item. Such an extension, were it possible, would have two very definite advantages. On the one hand, it would strengthen the hands of the Austrian Government in arresting the Nazi agitation, and on the other consolidate the foundations on which the present international loans are resting, a by no means negligible consideration from the point of view of British interests seeing the commitments in this country of the London money market and of His Majesty's Government.

15. As to the anxiety of Austria to increase her exports, especially timber, there is little room for doubt. The timber districts of Austria, which constitute 60% of the area of the country, are a fertile field for Nazi agitation, and Austrians of all shades of opinion consider that nothing but employment can effectively arrest the present agitation. An agreement to come to the assistance of Austria by taking her export surplus of timber, amounting to roughly 2 million cubic metres a year, should have far-reaching effects on the situation in Austria itself, and relieve a tension which is now so apparent in many directions.

#### (C) *Tariff Preferences*

16. As a further and wider measure of economic relief for Central Europe, I beg leave to suggest a Franco-British offer to Italy—in return for the concessions mentioned above—of a customs preference over a defined period of years, amounting to 10%, and applicable *mutatis mutandis* to all countries within the area Rome–Hamburg–Danzig–Athens which mutually recognise each other's political independence by non-aggression pacts and thereafter succeed in lowering, to that extent, the present tariff levels by concluding bilateral or multilateral trade agreements with each other.

17. The sacrifices to Great Britain and France involved in this step are obvious, but they should bring, as a counter-advantage:—

- (a) A necessity for Germany to recognise the independence of Austria.
- (b) Permanent competition between Italy and Germany for the—to them—important markets of Central and South-East Europe.
- (c) A hope of increased stability, elimination of purely national industries, and so of more prosperity and co-operation in the 'sheltered area' named; with resulting benefit to British and French exports which, in Austria at all events, are luxury articles and at present menaced with extinction by indirect restrictions, quotas and Nationalist policies.
- (d) Protection of Anglo-French loans and kindred monetary interests which, in Austria, far transcend British trade in value and importance and are now menaced with early default.

18. I have been careful not to over-emphasise the reaction upon Europe of the disappearance of Austria or its absorption by Germany. But short of

some early action to resolve the present difficulty on the basis of some comprehensive scheme, the present tension must continue with its attendant danger of international complications.

I have, &c.,  
W. SELBY

No. 49

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 24, 4.25 p.m.)*  
*No. 258 Telegraphic [R 4740/37/3]*

ROME, August 24, 1934, 2.45 p.m.

My telegram No. 255.<sup>1</sup>

I saw the French Ambassador<sup>2</sup> this morning who has just returned to Rome and showed him my telegram under reference and my telegram No. 254.<sup>3</sup> The latter corresponded exactly with the record which the French Chargé d'Affaires had telegraphed to Paris. The French Ambassador who will see the Director General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to-day said that he intended to tell the Director General that he personally fully agreed with him that any representations made at Vienna should be both unofficial and unostentatious and should take into account Germanic susceptibilities of the Austrian government.

The French Ambassador added that the French government were on the whole very well satisfied with the line taken by the Italian government during the last four weeks. His Excellency thought that it would be a mistake to press them to go further than they were inclined to go. Circumstances had for the moment placed them in the lead and their handling of the situation served the interests of our two governments no less than of Italy.

From an Austrian colleague who was with the Chancellor at Florence I learn that my telegram 254 and the official communiqué<sup>4</sup> give an adequate record of what transpired. A great deal of the conversation was taken up by personal talk regarding assassination of the late chancellor and to a certain extent about the part played by Dr. Rintelen;<sup>5</sup> my Austrian colleague begged that this last point might be regarded as most confidential. He confirmed the Chancellor's attitude towards policy of conciliation and said that a great many workers were coming over to the government not indeed joining the battle front but showing in many ways that they supported the Chancellor, the fact was Florence visit had been quite informal and the Chancellor was unaccompanied by experts and unprepared to go into details of foreign policy.

Repeated to Paris and Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> No. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Le Comte de Chambrun.

<sup>3</sup> No. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 42, note 1.

<sup>5</sup> Austrian Minister at Rome from August 1933 until his recall in July 1934 on suspicion of complicity in the 'Putsch' of July 25. Cf. Volume VI, Nos. 524, 526, and 528.

No. 50

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Campbell (Paris)*  
*No. 79 Saving: Telegraphic [R 4686/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 24, 1934

Rome telegrams Nos. 254 and 255.<sup>1</sup>

The information given by the Director-General regarding Signor Mussolini's interview with the Austrian Chancellor is vague and unsatisfying, and it seems to us impossible for His Majesty's Government or indeed the French Government either to support Signor Mussolini's advice at Vienna unless and until we know more precisely what advice has been given.

No other course therefore seems open to us but to await more detailed information, and when this is received, consult together again with a view to deciding whether any representations at Vienna can usefully be made.

Please express this view to the French Government and ask whether they concur. It had better now, I think, be realised that possibly, by the time when we do learn exactly what happened, the psychological moment may have passed. We must judge of that later; but should this prove to be the case, it is to be noted that the Austrian Government are already and spontaneously showing some slight tendency in the direction which we had in mind.

Repeated to Rome, No. 42 Saving, and Vienna, No. 14 Saving.

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 46 and 47.

No. 51

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 26, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 104 Telegraphic [R 4753/37/3]*

PARIS, August 25, 1934, 8.10 p.m.

Your telegram No. 79 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs concur and are sending similar instructions to Rome and Vienna.

With reference to the possibility mentioned in last paragraph Secretary General expressed strongly the view that it would be necessary for some action to be taken in Vienna in any case.

Repeated to Rome and Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> No. 50.

*Letter from Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir R. Vansittart*<sup>1</sup>

[C 5824/247/18]

PARIS, August 25, 1934

My dear Van,

I mentioned to Léger yesterday, as you had authorised me to do,<sup>2</sup> that you shared his views as to the dubious policy which is being pursued at present by Poland under the guidance of Beck. He was most interested to learn that you had reached the same conclusions.

He was even more depressed about it all than on the last occasion. You will remember my telling you<sup>2</sup> that he had claimed to have grounds for believing that the Poles were hatching some kind of secret arrangement with the Germans by which Germany, in the event of war, would be able to use Poland for revictualling herself in war material and provisions. He told me yesterday that five days ago the managing director of Havas, a white-bearded old gentleman who is usually content to leave things to his subordinates, had come himself to tell him that Havas had got on to this story from an absolutely certain source, and to ask what he was to do about it. Léger had forbidden him to publish it or make any use of it whatsoever. Yesterday morning, however, the cat was let out of the bag by the 'Echo de Paris', one of whose correspondents in Berlin claims to have had it from a Polish source. Léger's idea is that it must have been some well-informed Pole (possibly in the Polish Embassy) who was so disgusted with the business that he decided to try to kill it by exposing it. The press here are being told to keep quiet.

Léger went on to say that it looked all over as if the Poles were trying deliberately to create a hostile atmosphere, as they were adopting a studiously provocative attitude on a host of minor matters—flinging French citizens into prison for no reason, and so on. He supposed that the idea was to work up feeling in Poland to the pitch where a refusal to join in the pact would be acclaimed by public opinion. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs were determined not to fall into this trap, and to avoid anything in the nature of public polemics.

Is there anything that we could do, I wonder, to bring a little further gentle pressure to bear on the Poles? Presumably they would prefer not to get into our bad books if they can help it. We told them that we were in favour of the pact, but if we say no more they may think we are half-hearted about it. Could we not ask them how they are getting on with their study of the problem, and say we hope they will soon be in a position to give a favourable reply to the authors of the scheme?<sup>3</sup>

Yours ever

RONALD CAMPBELL

<sup>1</sup> This letter was filed in the Foreign Office on August 29.

<sup>2</sup> No relevant document has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>3</sup> In reply to this letter Sir R. Vansittart wrote to Mr. Campbell on August 27: 'I will have the Polish Chargé d'Affaires sent for and will manifest interest.'

**No. 53**

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Aveling (Warsaw)*

*No. 61 Telegraphic [C 5825/247/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 28, 1934, 6 p.m.*

Polish Chargé d'Affaires was informed<sup>1</sup> on August 27th that, before leaving for Geneva at the end of next week, I would naturally be glad to learn of any developments which might have taken place regarding the Eastern Pact proposals. If therefore anything could yet be said as a result of the examination of these proposals by the competent Polish authorities, His Majesty's Government would be interested to receive some indication of Polish attitude which they hoped would result before long in a favourable reply being given to the authors of the scheme.

Repeated to Paris as telegram No. 80 Saving.

<sup>1</sup> By Mr. Baxter. Cf. No. 52, note 3.

**No. 54**

*Minute by Mr. Speaight<sup>1</sup>*

*[C 5886/247/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 28, 1934*

In the course of a conversation with me yesterday the Lithuanian Minister said that he had heard from his government that, according to their information, the German Government would be prepared to come into the Eastern Security Pact on the following six conditions:

- (1) that Germany is accorded equal rights<sup>2</sup> in respect of armaments;
- (2) that France shall abandon her rôle of guarantor of the Eastern Pact and that the Soviet Union shall not become a guarantor of the Locarno Treaty;
- (3) that the pact shall be accompanied by a Convention embodying practical measures for the avoidance of war;<sup>3</sup>
- (4) that the 'mutual assistance' envisaged in the pact shall be 'of a limited character';
- (5) that the Baltic States shall not come into the pact on an equal footing with the other countries concerned: they would not be signatories or undertake any obligations themselves but their frontiers would be guaranteed by the signatories of the pact;

<sup>1</sup> A member of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> These two words are underlined on the filed copy and a marginal comment in Sir J. Simon's handwriting reads: 'Is not this going far beyond Hitler's offer?'

<sup>3</sup> A marginal comment in Sir J. Simon's handwriting here reads: 'What are they?'

(6) that Great Britain and Italy shall be prepared, if necessary, to participate in any consultations arising out of the application of the pact.

M. Balutis said that his government were particularly disturbed by conditions (2) and (5), which, taken together, they thought were intended to allow Germany a free run in the Baltic States without interference from other Great Powers.

## No. 55

*Mr. Aveling (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 3)*  
*No. 365 [C 5898/247/18]*

WARSAW, August 28, 1934

Sir,

Your attention will no doubt have been called to the Berlin telegram which appeared in the *Écho de Paris* of August 24th, in which it was alleged that a well-informed Pole had told a representative of the paper that Polish-German commercial negotiations had recently made considerable progress, largely in consequence of the *détente* brought about by the non-aggression pact, and that the proposed commercial treaty would contain secret clauses binding Poland to supply Germany with food and raw material in the event of war.<sup>1</sup>

2. The above report, which has been given wide circulation in this country, has been received generally with the derision it deserves and I have found few responsible people either among Poles or foreigners who attach the slightest importance to it. Apart from the obvious absurdity of the latter part of the story, no negotiations for the conclusion of a Commercial treaty with Germany are in fact taking place.

3. The French Ambassador, however, whose mistrust of Polish policy seems to have been deepened by the appearance in the Polish press of a number of somewhat critical articles dealing with French policy towards Poland, was at first by no means inclined to share the general view. In a conversation that I had with him on the subject several days ago he said that he was not prepared to rule out the possibility of some such arrangement being under negotiation and he asked me if I would make such enquiries as I could and pass on to him any information that it might be possible to obtain. The rumour has since been officially and categorically denied in the Government press; and from a talk which I had with him yesterday, I gather that Monsieur Laroche has now satisfied himself that it is in fact entirely devoid of any foundation.

4. In the course of general conversation regarding Franco-Polish relations I suggested to him that if, as he contended, the French had cause to complain of the way in which the Polish press was constantly harping on Poland's

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 52.

political and economic grievances vis-à-vis France, the French press could scarcely be said to have made any very notable contribution to the harmonious relations of the two countries. Rumours of the kind referred to and others to the effect that Poland's hesitancy to accept the Eastern Pact was due to some secret understanding with Germany were surely not calculated either to foster Polish sympathy or to encourage the Poles to overcome their reluctance to support the Eastern Pact proposals.

5. Monsieur Laroche said that he shared my views but that unfortunately he could do little in the matter seeing that he was not even able to prevent the publication of reports which had recently been appearing in the French as well as the Polish press regarding his own recall and his alleged differences of opinion with Monsieur Barthou on questions of policy. As regards the Polish press, however, he had reason to believe that the recent articles criticising France and French economic policy in Poland (see my despatch No. 364 E)<sup>2</sup> had much annoyed Marshal Pilsudski<sup>3</sup> who, according to his information, had instructed both Monsieur Beck and other members of the Government to see that greater circumspection and restraint were shown in future public comment on matters affecting Franco-Polish relations.

I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Paris and Berlin.

I have, &c.,

A. FRANCIS AVELING

<sup>2</sup> This despatch of August 28, received September 3, is not printed.

<sup>3</sup> Marshal Josef Pilsudski, Inspector-General of the Polish Armed Forces and Minister of War since 1926, had been Chief of State 1919-22 and Prime Minister, October 1926-June 1928, and August-December 1930.

## No. 56

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 30, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 108 Telegraphic [R 4813/37/3]*

VIENNA, August 29, 1934, 7 p.m.

In response to my enquiry Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this morning that press communiqué<sup>1</sup> issued after meeting between Signor Mussolini and Austrian Chancellor represented in general terms what had passed between the two statesmen. Pact of Rome<sup>2</sup> provided for frequent discussions between representatives of Italy, Hungary and Austria of questions of mutual interest to the three countries and meeting in Rome was in accordance with procedure laid down.

Chancellor had taken occasion to expose to Signor Mussolini financial difficulties with which Austrian government were confronted.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> In a minute of August 30 Mr. Carr remarked that this telegram 'contains not a word about the advice which has been given by Signor Mussolini to the Chancellor. The silence

Turning to question of Geneva Minister for Foreign Affairs said that I might inform my government that there were two points Chancellor intended to raise when he visited Geneva.

1. He would ask for assistance of Powers to ensure independence of Austria and non-interference with Austrian internal affairs especially by Germany.

2. Austria considered as she was defending a European interest she was entitled to financial help from the Powers. Chancellor would urge this point at Geneva since financially Austrian government was in sore straits. Minister for Foreign Affairs said that Chancellor had informed Signor Mussolini who was accordingly aware of his programme for Geneva.

Minister for Foreign Affairs drew my attention to article in this morning's Reichspost indicating collusion of Yugoslav authorities with National-Socialist agitators who had taken refuge over Yugoslav border and complained bitterly of attitude of Yugoslav authorities (translation of article follows by post).<sup>4</sup> He observed that it was intervention in internal affairs of Austria in its worst form and something must be done by the Powers to preserve Austria from this and similar agitation.<sup>5</sup>

French Minister has been similarly informed by Minister for Foreign Affairs and is advising his government accordingly.

Repeated to Rome and Belgrade.

on this point must be deliberate, and means either that Signor Mussolini did not, after all, say anything on the subject, or else that he does not wish us to say anything and is therefore not disclosing what he said himself.'

<sup>4</sup> Not printed. For a summary see *The Times*, August 30, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> In his telegram No. 14 of August 31 Mr. Cowan (Second Secretary in H.M. Embassy at Belgrade) referred to Vienna telegram No. 108 and said that the 'Reichspost article referred to by Sir W. Selby and other similar articles alleged to have appeared in Austrian press' had caused 'considerable indignation here and implications contained therein are officially denied'. He added: 'Unfortunately Yugoslav press is now openly accusing Italy of having inspired and financed this Austrian press campaign.'

## No. 57

*Mr. Newton (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 30)*

*No. 179 Saving: Telegraphic [C 5859/247/18]*

BERLIN, August 29, 1934

Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee.

My letter to Mr. Sargent of August 21st.<sup>1</sup>

Lithuanian Minister has just told me that he believes Poland in return for very favourable arrangement in regard to Danzig has agreed to act in line with Germany in the matter of Eastern Pact.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Aveling's despatch No. 353 E of August 14 from Warsaw (received in the Foreign Office on August 20) gave particulars of six agreements between the Polish Government and the Free City of Danzig signed at Danzig on August 6. In a minute attached to the



He understands that German and Polish Governments will both accept in principle subject to conditions. By prior arrangement these conditions will in each case be different except that neither will agree to entry of foreign troops on their territory. Other Polish conditions might, he thought, be (1) a loan from France and (2) a settlement of their relations with Lithuania.

Repeated to Warsaw.

above telegram Mr. Baxter wrote: 'We have no information to show that the recent Polish-Danzig agreements were especially favourable to Poland. On the other hand it is not unlikely that the Poles and Germans will concert together as regards their replies to the Eastern Pact. C. W. Baxter. 30/8.' See *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 177, 184, and 187 for German-Polish exchanges, August 27-31, 1934, on the attitude of these governments towards the proposed Eastern Pact.

## No. 58

*Sir H. Montgomery<sup>1</sup> (The Hague) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 31)*

*No. 311 [C 5999/247/18]*

*Confidential*

THE HAGUE, August 29, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to forward herewith two despatches from the Military Attaché to this Legation.<sup>2</sup>

2. The speech made by the Burgomaster of Breda at the reception given by him to the officers of the Light Brigade on the occasion of the recent manœuvres in the neighbourhood of Breda, which forms the enclosure in the first of these despatches, struck me as of considerable interest, following, as it did, on the petition addressed to the Netherlands Government by representatives of the Municipalities of North Brabant and Limburg. (See my despatch No. 251 of June 28th).<sup>3</sup>

3. I accordingly asked Major Fraser to endeavour to ascertain by private conversation in military circles to what extent it represented the views of the inhabitants of those provinces, in particular, and of the Netherlands in general.

4. In the further despatch enclosed herein Major Fraser has reported the results of a conversation with the head of the Intelligence Section of the General Staff, who is, as Major Fraser points out, also responsible for internal intelligence service.

5. Colonel van Oorschot, whom I know personally, is no doubt in a position to speak with great knowledge of the origins of the apparent nervousness in North Brabant. As the result, however, of such observations as I have been

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Minister at The Hague.

<sup>2</sup> These despatches of August 27 and 28 respectively from Major W. Fraser are not printed.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed. In his speech of August 19 the Burgomaster referred to the need for measures to protect the country 'against attacks upon our neutrality and independent national existence of which our Southern provinces—as is imaginable—would have to absorb the first shock'.

able personally to make I should say that there is a nervousness, not only in the South Eastern Provinces but elsewhere in the Netherlands, which cannot be fully accounted for by the operations of Mr. van der Poel<sup>4</sup> and the press campaign to which Colonel van Oorschot referred. I shall of course lose no opportunity of discreetly obtaining further information on this point.

6. With regard to the two last paragraphs of Major Fraser's despatch<sup>5</sup> of August 28th, though it is a delicate matter for me to discuss with persons in authority in this country, I have recently gathered the impression that any public declaration in Great Britain of a guarantee of Dutch neutrality or of the intention to assist the Netherlands in case of violation of their territory by Germany would, for the reasons stated in Major Fraser's despatch, not be welcomed in this country.

7. But, assuming that it is, in fact, the policy of His Majesty's Government to regard the integrity of Holland as a vital interest, anything that can be done, in the press or otherwise, to preserve and enhance the present feeling of tacit reliance on British aid in case of need, would probably tend to increase the determination of the Dutch to resist any aggression from the East.<sup>6</sup>

I have, &c.,

HUBERT MONTGOMERY

<sup>4</sup> Major Fraser described Mr. van der Poel as 'a Belgian by birth, but now a naturalized Dutchman. His Belgian politics are violently "activist", i.e., he is in favour of an autonomous Flanders, or a Flanders united with Holland: he is violently anti-French and to this extent pro-German.'

<sup>5</sup> These read: 'Referring to the recent declarations of Sir John Simon and Mr. Baldwin on the Belgian situation [cf. No. 26, notes 3 and 4], Colonel van Oorschot said that there had not been any particular reaction in Holland, as every Dutchman had always regarded the substance of the declarations as self evident. As for the Dutch themselves, they would always prefer to be left outside any declarations or guarantees.'

'With reference to the last remark of Colonel van Oorschot, there is no doubt that the Dutch do in fact consider the integrity of their country as being almost if not quite as important to Great Britain as that of Belgium, and that they are confident that if they were attacked by Germany they would receive British aid. In this same conversation, Colonel van Oorschot made use of the phrase "the worst we can be is allies", meaning that if Holland ever had the misfortune to be involved in a war in Europe, Great Britain would certainly be on her side. At the same time it is probable that not only would they consider that any British declaration to this effect might give rise to the impression in Germany that they, the Dutch, had asked for some sort of assurance, but also the very idea that they are in need of any sort of guarantee at all is repugnant to their Dutch pride.'

<sup>6</sup> Minutes attached to this despatch included the following by Mr. Sargent, Sir R. Vansittart, and Sir J. Simon. 'It is no good trying to deal with Dutch security except *pari passu* with Belgian security . . . O. G. Sargent. Sep. 15.' 'I am inclined to agree with Mr. Sargent. But I do not believe we shall do or say anything further about Belgium for some time; anyhow I do not believe the government will go further until after the next election. That means putting off for two years any encouragement to the Dutch to conclude a non-aggression pact. And two years will be found to be a very long while, in view of the impending rapidity of German development and capacity for aggression. The moment may have passed then. This is at least a strong argument in the other direction . . . R.V. Sept. 16.' 'Yes: we must have a thorough discussion. Meanwhile, I have discouraged M. Jaspar [Belgian Minister of Finance] from his projected visit to London. J.S. Sep. 20.' Cf. Nos. 64 and 94 below.

*Letter from Mr. Newton (Berlin) to Mr. Carr<sup>1</sup>*  
[R 4846/37/3]

BERLIN, August 29, 1934

My dear Carr,

In reply to your letter No. R 4367/37/3 of August 17th<sup>2</sup> about the circumstances of Papen's appointment to Vienna, I quite agree that it would be interesting to know whether any steps have been taken to punish those responsible for Bose's<sup>3</sup> murder. Unfortunately under present conditions such information is difficult to obtain and we doubt whether we shall ever hear, though we will of course watch out.

In regard to Papen's position, you will have seen from our despatch No. 893<sup>4</sup> of July 27 that Hitler's letter of appointment definitely laid down that Papen should be subordinate personally to the Chancellor. It is true that Neurath was at pains to impress on Cazalet<sup>5</sup> that Papen would be subordinate to himself, but we are not sure how far Papen and the Chancellor share Neurath's view of the position. We suspect that routine work will doubtless continue to be dealt with by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs but that Papen will address the Chancellor direct at his discretion. I happened to meet the Head of the Austrian section of the Ministry at lunch the other day and had an opportunity of making some reference to the position. He said the Ministry thought it might often be convenient if Papen would communicate direct with the Chancellor. The Ministry cannot always be submitting things to Hitler and on certain matters it may be a relief if Papen has direct access. This I can well imagine to be so in regard to issues which might bring the Ministry into collision with the Party.

Papen was over here for the elections<sup>6</sup> and took the opportunity to make a verbal report. As Vienna is so close to Berlin he may adopt the procedure of the Italian Ambassador to the Holy See and transact some of his more important business by word of mouth. The spoken word is more suitable to his methods than the written.

He was to have attended the Saar demonstration at Ehrenbreitstein when, according to a friend in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, it was expected that he would make a brief speech handing over his special Saar functions to his successor.<sup>7</sup> He was, however, prevented by the recurrence of an old

<sup>1</sup> This letter was filed in the Foreign Office on September 3.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume VI, No. 550, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Chef de Cabinet to Herr von Papen.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed. Cf. *The Times*, July 28, 1934, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Captain Victor Cazalet, Member of Parliament for Chippenham, had recently visited Central Europe.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 44, note 4.

<sup>7</sup> Herr von Papen had been Reich Commissioner for the Saar until July 26, 1934, when he was succeeded by Herr Josef Burchel, Gauleiter of the Palatinate and the Saar since May 1933.

complaint. Whether this reason, as published in the press, is true or half true, I cannot at present say.

Yours ever  
BASIL C. NEWTON

No. 60

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Newton (Berlin)*  
*No. 31 Saving: Telegraphic [C 5845/90/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 30, 1934, 5 p.m.

My telegrams Nos. 163<sup>1</sup> and 164<sup>2</sup> of 14th August. Commercial Debts.

1. If no reply has yet been received to your Note of 15th August<sup>3</sup> you should now press the German Government to furnish a reply at the earliest possible date. You should impress upon them that His Majesty's Government are continuing to receive a large number of protests from Chambers of Commerce and individual traders in this country as regards these unpaid commercial debts and that they attach the greatest importance to an early settlement of the question.

2. You should remind the German Government that arrangements have been concluded between the French and German Governments for the liquidation of the unpaid commercial debts due to France<sup>4</sup> and that His Majesty's Government are therefore entitled to claim that the commercial debts due to this country should be liquidated on not less favourable terms in view of the undertaking given by the German Government that Anglo-German trade relations should continue on a non-discriminatory basis.

3. In making this communication you should express orally the surprise with which His Majesty's Government observed that Dr. Schacht, in his speech at Leipzig on 26th August stated, according to reports in the London press,<sup>5</sup> that 'it was grotesque that foreign Governments should take official diplomatic action about the payment of a few overdue commercial debts'. It is not the case, as this statement would seem to imply, that these unpaid debts are insignificant. The debts due between 1st March 1934 and 30th June 1934 amount to approximately £2 million and the total amount now owing is considerably greater. The non-payment of these debts necessarily calls for diplomatic action on the part of His Majesty's Government since it is not due to any failure on the part of the German merchants to meet their commitments but to the exchange restrictions imposed by the German Government.

<sup>1</sup> No. 23.

<sup>2</sup> No. 24.

<sup>3</sup> No. 27.

<sup>4</sup> On July 28 a Franco-German Treaty of Commerce, Settlement and Navigation which included an Agreement concerning commercial payments had been signed; cf. *The Times*, July 30, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, August 27, p. 9. In this speech Dr. Schacht announced the Reich Government's decision to replace the foreign exchange allotment system in force since June 1934 by a new system; cf. No. 83 below, note 1. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 175.

4. If any discussion takes place you may find it useful to refer to the passage in Dr. Schacht's speech when he spoke of the increasing volume of unpaid commercial debts resulting from the existing exchange restrictions and stated that it had caused the customary import against three-months' credit to be replaced by a system of payment in cash on import which must lead to a reduction of trade. Dr. Schacht said in the same speech that the ruling principle in commerce was to make no engagements which could not be met and that nobody could be expected to deliver goods which would not be paid for when due. These are precisely the principles which must, in the view of His Majesty's Government, be applied to the commercial debts now in question and the failure to make any reasonable proposal in regard to their liquidation is clearly inconsistent with the elementary principles of commerce referred to in Dr. Schacht's speech.

### No. 61

*Mr. Newton (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received August 31, 2 p.m.)*

*No. 240 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 5875/90/18]*

BERLIN, August 31, 1934

Your telegram No. 31 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

I am deferring action in view of promise reported in my telegram No. 238.<sup>2</sup> You will no doubt also wish to have time to consider speech by Dr. Schacht at Bad Eilsen referred to in my telegram No. 239.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 60.

<sup>2</sup> In this telegram of August 30, not printed, Mr. Newton referred to his telegram No. 229 (No. 27) and said that in 'reply to enquiry I learn I may expect German reply now in two or three days'. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 176, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed. In this telegram, telephoned to the Foreign Office at 1.30 p.m. on August 31, Mr. Newton summarized Dr. Schacht's speech of the previous day in which he requested a complete moratorium of several years for Germany's foreign debt payments and a reduction of the burden of foreign indebtedness to a figure which Germany could bear on the expiry of the moratorium. Cf. *The Times*, August 31, p. 10.

In a minute of September 1 on Mr. Newton's telegram No. 240 above, Mr. J. V. Perowne, a member of the Central Department, said that the speech did not 'really alter things one way or the other'. In an undated minute, Sir R. Vansittart wrote: 'So far as I am concerned I do not wish for any time at all to consider Dr. Schacht's further and foreseen step along the road of fraudulent bankruptcy. I have never altered my opinion on the subject of Germany or of our interests in and attitude towards her, and it is not Dr. Schacht's speech that will make me do so. His speech has had in the world the reception which it deserved. The best reply to it will be to put in our new representation at once—i.e. so soon as we can do so compatibly with the "promise" herewith mentioned. R.V.'

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Murray (Rome)*

*No. 275 Telegraphic [R 4821/4355/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 31, 1934, 5.45 p.m.

As you know, we have hoped that the Austrian Government, following the Chancellor's visit to Signor Mussolini, would recognise the wisdom of conciliating both Socialists and pan-German elements who might now be prepared to support the policy of Austrian independence. Unfortunately, Vienna telegram No. 109,<sup>1</sup> together with Prince Starhemberg's hostile attitude towards pan-Germans, reported in to-day's *Times*,<sup>2</sup> seem to point in exactly the opposite direction, and to show that the Austrian Government are continuing to antagonise all those elements on either wing which are not prepared to adopt *in toto* the Heimwehr programme. Such a course seems to us to be fraught with the gravest danger and the opportune moment has, in our opinion, arrived for His Majesty's Government and the French Government to support at Vienna anything which Signor Mussolini may have said to the Chancellor about the importance of conciliation.

Before, however, proposing such action to the French Government, we should like to make a further effort, if we can do so without appearing importunate, to ascertain precisely what Signor Mussolini did say. Failing this, we shall have to do our best, in concert with the French Government, on the basis of such information as we have already received.

Please make further enquiries of the Italian Government at your discretion in the above sense.

Repeated to Paris, No. 83 Saving, and Vienna, No. 68.

<sup>1</sup> Received at 5.40 p.m. on August 30, not printed. This telegram, sent in reply to Foreign Office telegram No. 67 of August 29, not printed, asking for the latest information on the position of certain Socialist leaders in Austria, reported that, as far as could be ascertained privately, they were 'still in custody either in prison or in hospitals' and that in a speech the previous day the Chancellor had 'attacked Socialist leadership for its anti-religious atheist upbringing of school children'.

<sup>2</sup> According to this report (*The Times*, August 31, p. 9) Prince Starhemberg, at a Heimwehr rally in Vienna on August 30, had referred to the reported desire of some pan-Germans to make peace with the patriotic movement and said that 'they were men who until July 25 were flying other colours, and they would have to change much before qualifying for admission into the patriotic ranks'.

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Murray (Rome)**No. 769 [C 5817/247/18]*FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 31, 1934*

Sir,

The Italian Chargé d'Affaires called on Sir Robert Vansittart on August 27th, and, after emphasising that he was speaking without any official instructions and merely to clear his own mind, enquired what would be the attitude of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom if the German or Polish Government were to substitute for the present scheme of the Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee a counter-draft which would provide practically only for consultation and would reduce anything like mutual assurance or security to a vanishing minimum.

2. Sir Robert Vansittart replied that he could not, of course, answer for His Majesty's Government without first obtaining instructions, for which at present he had no opportunity; but he added that, if Monsieur Vitetti wished, he would express his own personal opinion on the understanding that it was to be regarded as no more than his own personal opinion.

3. Sir Robert Vansittart then said that His Majesty's Government had given their support to the general idea of this pact of mutual assistance, no draft of which, he ventured to remind Monsieur Vitetti, had ever been consigned to paper or even attempted, for one very good reason—that if and when it was realised on the entirely unobjectionable model which His Majesty's Government had in view, it might provide new ground for taking up again with better prospects the discussion of disarmament and equality of rights. It must be manifest, however, that if the German or Polish Government were to reduce the security aspect of the proposed agreement to practically nothing, the French Government would reply that consultation was not security, and the whole ground for taking up again the subjects of disarmament and Gleichberechtigung would *ipso facto* disappear. In these circumstances Sir Robert Vansittart personally most emphatically considered that the matter was not worth pursuing, and he did not think that His Majesty's Government would be at all likely to consent to a suggestion that they should participate<sup>1</sup> in any useless consultative pact, since they had from the start made it clear that they did not intend to assume any further obligations themselves and that they had in fact contributed their part by their signature of the already existing Locarno [*? agreement*]. Sir Robert Vansittart asked Monsieur Vitetti whether he thought that the existing Locarno would ever have come into being at all or would have the slightest practical value if it had come into being on a basis restricted to consultation only, and added that the answer appeared quite evident and that any attempt to reduce to such nullity the Eastern Pact would in effect, even if not in intention, be equivalent to wrecking tactics.

<sup>1</sup> On the filed copy of Sir R. Vansittart's account of this interview Sir J. Simon commented at this point: 'We are not going to "participate" anyway. J.S.'

4. To all this Monsieur Vitetti agreed, and added that even in the improbable event of the Italian and British Governments being willing to participate in a consultative pact, their position would be a completely ridiculous one if, after identifying the villain, their rôle consisted in immediate withdrawal from the stage.

I am, &c.,  
(For the Secretary of State)  
C. W. BAXTER

No. 64

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 5)*  
*No. 464 [C 5962/3279/4]*

*Confidential*

BRUSSELS, August 31, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that at the conclusion of my interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs today, Monsieur Jaspar referred to the desire he had already expressed to you personally, Sir, to proceed to England and discuss with you the military side of future Anglo-Belgian relations.<sup>1</sup> He added that he quite understood your decision in the matter which you had expressed to him with the utmost courtesy.<sup>2</sup> He was, however, looking forward very much to an opportunity of re-opening the discussion at Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> On May 17, 1934, during a visit to London, M. Hymans, the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, had renewed the proposal, which had been made on various occasions since 1919, for a British guarantee of Belgium (cf. First Series, Volume XII, Nos. 9, 11, 12, 23, 38, 48; cf. also *Documents Diplomatiques Belges 1920-1940*, vol. iii (Brussels, 1964), No. 130). He proposed the signing of a convention providing that Great Britain would immediately come to the help of Belgium with all her forces in the event of invasion or of unprovoked attack against Belgian territory. He recognized that Great Britain would honour her obligation to Belgium under the Locarno treaty but was not certain that the position would be so clear to other countries. He felt that a further guarantee would have a great deterrent effect. On May 31 at Geneva Sir J. Simon asked M. Hymans whether his government had considered the possible value of a non-aggression pact with Germany (cf. Volume VI, No. 432, para. 5, and No. 466; and *D.D.B., op. cit.*, No. 132). The draft convention proposed by M. Hymans did not commend itself to the British Cabinet during June. It was considered that it would constitute an additional contribution to French security which would be obtained by France at the cost of no concession whatsoever on her part; that it would be difficult to reconcile with the existing Treaty of Locarno; and that it would be more difficult to explain and justify to British public opinion than a unilateral declaration. The last two points were stressed by Mr. Sargent to Baron Pierre van Zuylen of the Belgian Foreign Office, who visited London at the end of June. The proposed unilateral declaration was made in the form of Sir J. Simon's speech on July 13 (cf. No. 26, note 3). Baron van Zuylen gave a rather full account of these discussions from the Belgian point of view in *Les Mains Libres, Politique Extérieure de la Belgique, 1914-1940* (Brussels, 1950), pp. 293-314.

<sup>2</sup> On July 11 Sir J. Simon had written to M. Jaspar, M. Hymans' successor, in reply to M. Jaspar's letter of July 5 regarding a visit to London and asked him to postpone his visit for the time being as it 'might well attract too much attention and arouse unjustifiable



2. His Excellency was undoubtedly pleased with the attitude of His Majesty's Government as far as matters had gone but he wants more. I informed His Excellency that I had nothing of any precise nature to tell him on the subject, otherwise I should long ago have done so. He emphasised several times the extreme importance to the peace of the world, as well as to Belgium, which he attached to some more definite understanding.

3. I took the opportunity of enquiring what was his impression of the reaction in Germany to your declaration in the House of Commons and to the statement of the Lord President of the Council.<sup>3</sup> He replied that the effect had been excellent but ephemeral.

4. It is quite evident that the whole of the policy of the present Belgian Government centres around the objective of attaining security by some more concrete arrangement with Great Britain. Belgium views with horror the possibility of again becoming a no-man's land.

I have, &c.,  
ESMOND OVEY

commentary following as it would so close upon the recent visit to London of M. Hymans'. A suggestion by Baron van Zuylen on July 11 that M. Jaspar might visit London privately was also evaded. A minute by Sir J. Simon read: 'The suggestion of coming *incognito* is completely ridiculous. I suppose I should offer to meet him in a beard and a false nose. J.S. July 15.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 26, notes 3 and 4. See also *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 94.

## No. 65

*Letter from Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Geneva)*<sup>1</sup>

[R 5104/37/3]

VIENNA, August 31, 1934

My dear Sir John,

I expect that before your departure for Geneva you will have been fully informed by Vansittart of the latest developments in the Austrian position. I will therefore refrain from wearying you upon that topic when you must have so much else to think about. I do, however, desire to express the hope that you will be able to see the Chancellor and his Minister for Foreign Affairs, who speaks excellent English, in the course of your visit to Geneva, as I feel it would be of the utmost use if they were given the opportunity to expose their point of view to you in person.

Whether we agree or not with their particular outlook on the future government of the Austrian State, which is so diverse from our own conception of popular government, the fact of the matter is that Austria is faced with great difficulties on every side. That they would be deeply appreciative of being able to explain their point of view to you goes almost without saying, and it

<sup>1</sup> This letter was filed in the Foreign Office on September 18. Sir J. Simon arrived in Geneva on September 9 (cf. No. 30, note 2). He returned to England on September 15.

would certainly greatly strengthen my hands hereafter in my future dealings with them.

You may as well be aware of the fact that this Mission is rather under suspicion here, among certain of the more extreme adherents of the Government, that they are not as whole-heartedly Heimwehr in their sympathy as they should be, our interventions after the February events having been misunderstood and in many of the more unintelligent quarters even resented. On this point I have consistently and firmly taken the line that if the public opinion of England as a whole, to which Austrians undoubtedly attach great importance, is to remain favourable to Austria, the greater the measure of clemency they can extend to their political opponents the more certain can they be of British good will, equally does it seem to British opinion that they would strengthen their own hands for the struggle in which they are engaged. On the instructions I have received from you I believe this attitude expresses your point of view.

In the meantime the financial difficulties of Austria are likely to arise in rather an acute form in the Financial Committee of the League, where fortunately Niemeyer<sup>2</sup> of the Bank of England is representing us, and is likely to take the lead in whatever action may be necessary; especially as regards the reduction of interest on our considerable loans to Austria.

It would, I am sure, be of advantage if you could see Niemeyer before you see the Chancellor, as he would be able to furnish you with full conclusions in regard to the financial position and of our own particular interest in it.

With apologies for troubling you with this letter,

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

W. SELBY

<sup>2</sup> Sir Otto Niemeyer went from H.M. Treasury to the Bank of England in 1927. He was a Director of the Bank for International Settlements, and had been a member of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations since 1922 and Chairman of that Committee in 1927.

**No. 66**

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Newton (Berlin)*

*No. 171 Telegraphic [C 5875/90/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 1, 1934, 12.45 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 240<sup>1</sup> (of August 31: German commercial debts to British firms).

If German reply has not been received by September 3, afternoon, you should proceed as already instructed. I do not propose to send you supple-

<sup>1</sup> No. 61.

mentary instructions as a result of Dr. Schacht's speech at Bad Eilsen, which does not affect our views.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A copy and a translation of the German Government's reply of September 4 to the British note of August 15 (see Nos. 24 and 27) were received in the Foreign Office on September 5 as enclosures in Berlin despatch No. 1077 E. In their reply (not printed) the German Government declined to accept responsibility for the arrears of commercial debts, indicated that fresh steps were being taken to eliminate the uncertainty of payment in future Anglo-German commercial transactions, pointed out that direct negotiations between individual private business firms was the usual method of regulating private obligations but stated that any necessary official decisions would be taken to settle the outstanding arrears as rapidly as possible. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 185, note 3.

## No. 67

*Mr. Palairet<sup>1</sup> (Bucharest) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 1, 4 p.m.)*  
*No. 89 Telegraphic [C 5892/247/18]*

BUCHAREST, September 1, 1934, 1.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 85.<sup>2</sup>

I endeavoured yesterday to extract from Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,<sup>3</sup> who has returned from France, some enlightenment as to why Roumania had accepted Polish proposal that she should participate in Eastern Pact but he put me off with generalities about the impossibility that Roumania should be excluded from security pact of this kind. I observed that Monsieur Titulescu had not taken this view when I had last seen him to which Under-Secretary of State replied that character of proposed pact had only recently become clear. He said that French Government had not refused Roumania's request but that question had been left in suspense and was doubtless now being discussed in Paris by Monsieur Titulescu.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Minister at Bucharest.

<sup>2</sup> Volume VI, No. 557.

<sup>3</sup> M. Radulescu.

<sup>4</sup> M. Titulescu had conversations, relating mainly to financial questions, with M. Barthou in Paris on September 3. In his telegram No. 245 Saving of September 6 (Volume VII, No. 626) Sir G. Clerk said that M. Barthou seemed to have succeeded in persuading M. Titulescu not to persist in his proposal to demand inclusion of Roumania in the Eastern Pact.

## No. 68

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 1, 4.35 p.m.)*  
*No. 267 Telegraphic [R 4838/37/3]*

*Important*

ROME, September 1, 1934, 3 p.m.

Your telegram No. 275.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of Signor Mussolini's conversation with French Ambassador reported in my telegram No. 266<sup>2</sup> there would seem to be no reason why His

<sup>1</sup> No. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Received by telephone at 11.30 a.m. on September 1, not printed. In this telegram Mr. Murray reported le Comte de Chambrun's account of his interview with Signor Mussolini on August 31.

Majesty's Government and French Government should not forthwith support at Geneva counsels of conciliation which Signor Mussolini evidently gave to Chancellor.

I happened to be seeing Baron Aloisi<sup>3</sup> this morning and took the opportunity to say developments reported in Vienna telegram No. 109<sup>4</sup> and Prince Starhemberg's hostility to pan-Germans were causing me anxiety and made me wonder whether Chancellor had really taken to heart excellent advice which he had received from Signor Mussolini. Baron Aloisi said that he had not yet seen report of what Prince Starhemberg had said nor heard of untoward developments amongst Socialists but he would be seeing Chancellor at Geneva and would again urge him to pursue conciliatory policy.

<sup>3</sup> Chef de Cabinet to Signor Mussolini and Italian Under-Secretary of State for League of Nations Affairs.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 62, note 1.

## No. 69

*Letter from Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received September 2)*  
[R 5096/37/3]

ROME, September 1, 1934

My dear Van

Your letter of August 24th.<sup>1</sup>

I am afraid that you have good reason to feel that you have received less courteous treatment from Mussolini and the Italian Foreign Office than you had a right to expect. I do not think that either deliberately intended to be discourteous, but what happened is an example of the way things get done in this country, and of how difficult it is really to collaborate with Italians. According to our ideas such collaboration means that each side does exactly what it has promised to do at the moment agreed upon. An Italian, on the other hand,—and the proposition is general and not merely applicable to diplomacy—if some time or other he does 80 or 90 per cent. of what he said he would do, feels that he has done his bit, and would be rather aggrieved if taken to task for having brought the whole scheme to nought, or at least distorted it badly through defective collaboration.

In the present instance I think the Italian Foreign Office are probably more to blame than Mussolini. The man lives in a sort of vacuum and one always has the feeling that communications reach him in a highly attenuated form, more particularly when he is away from Rome, as was the case before the Florence meeting. I hope that Chambrun's account of his interview<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this letter, not printed, Sir R. Vansittart said that he did not think 'we have been very courteously treated by Mussolini and the Italian Foreign Office', but as telegram No. 79 Saving to Paris (No. 50) showed 'we propose to take all this in as good part as possible'. With regard to the talk of future financial assistance to Austria he thought that there was 'little or no prospect of further contributions from this end'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 68.

will give you enough to go on and that it may not be too late to give effective advice to Schuschnigg as to the way to handle his potential supporters but no less potential enemies.

I have noted what you say about the possibility, or rather impossibility, of financial assistance to Austria. It does not come to me as any surprise. Schuschnigg apparently intends to raise the question at Geneva, and if, as the Italians seem to think, the continued existence of his Government depends on assistance in cash, it will then be for the Italians and the French to make up their minds how much such continued existence is worth to them in lire and francs. Whatever may be the case in France (and I see that there are rumours of a large loan to Poland), I do not think that Italy is in any position to help Austria with a loan. She has, as a matter of fact, already helped pretty well up to the limit of her resources, and I should judge that 100 million schillings, let alone 200 millions, would be quite outside her capacity.

From something Aloisi let fall in conversation to-day I have no sort of doubt that he realises the serious consequences of a German *rapprochement* with Yugoslavia; in fact he said that in his opinion it was the most menacing development at present in sight. Feeling like this, the Italians are bound to oppose the Anschluss for all they are worth; but supposing they began to think that owing to money not being forthcoming or for any other reason, further attempts to hold off the Anschluss were doomed to fail? I am afraid that I would not trust them not to attempt to adjust their policy to the new circumstances that the Anschluss would bring in its train. As I told Carr a week or two ago, the Italians seem to me to be very much on their toes and ready to duck, dodge or back away from anything that threatens, and if they think that the Anschluss is inevitable, there remains a risk, remote but not absolutely negligible, that they might try and propitiate the triumphant German rather than find themselves alone in the way of his irresistible advance.<sup>3</sup> An opportunist policy perhaps, but the Italians are opportunists both by taste and conviction.

Yours ever  
J. MURRAY

<sup>3</sup> A marginal note on the filed copy here read: 'I agree. O. G. S[argent].'

## No. 70

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 3, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 238 Saving: Telegraphic [R 4836/37/3]*

PARIS, *September 2, 1934*

Your telegram No. 275 to Rome.<sup>1</sup>

French Government informed.<sup>2</sup> They will await result of your further enquiry in Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 84 Saving of August 31 to Paris, not printed, referred to No. 62 and said: 'You may inform French Government.'

2. Their information from Vienna is similar to yours: they regard Prince Stahremberg's [*sic*] pronouncements as particularly unfortunate.

3. As regards future generally they consider, like you, that Austrian Government should show some initiative in which the Powers could support them rather than expect the Powers always to take the lead.

4. They seem however still to be playing with the idea of a general convention the signatories of which would in some way re-affirm the independence of Austria and mutually engage to abstain from interference in each other's affairs. Such a convention, apart from benefit of Germany's signature, if obtainable, might even, it is thought, appeal to Italy who is prone to complain that anti-fascist plots are hatched on French soil. On the other hand, her signature would go some way to calm apprehensions of Yugoslavia. I do not think that idea has taken any very definite shape, but I should not be surprised if French delegation put forward something of the sort at Geneva.

## No. 71

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Campbell (Paris)*

*No. 88 Saving: Telegraphic [R 4837/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, September 3, 1934, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 238 Saving<sup>1</sup> and Rome telegram No. 266.<sup>2</sup>

We presume that the French Government agree that instructions should now be sent to the French and British Ministers at Vienna to support the advice given by Signor Mussolini to the Austrian Chancellor to consolidate his Government by widening the basis of its support.

In order to make this advice effective, it may be desirable that the two Ministers should also suggest to the Chancellor that one important means of conciliating Socialist opinion would be to release the Socialist leaders who have been detained without trial since the February Putsch. This point has a considerable influence on public opinion in this country, and would seem to be the test of conciliatory intentions. It might at the same time be desirable for them tactfully to deprecate the uncompromising attitude publicly adopted by Prince Starhemberg towards the Nationalists. I should be glad to learn the views of the French Government on these points with a view to sending instructions at once to Sir W. Selby. We would, of course, inform the Italian Government that we were doing so.

Repeated to Vienna No. 69, and Rome No. 277.

<sup>1</sup> No. 70.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 68, note 2.

**No. 72**

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 4, 3.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 113 Telegraphic [R 4885/37/3]*

*Immediate*

VIENNA, September 4, 1934, 1.30 p.m.

Following for Sir R. Vansittart:—

*Personal*

Foreign Office telegram No. 69.<sup>1</sup>

I must respectfully submit that whatever advice it may be decided to tender to Chancellor as a result of agreement with French and Italian governments would come far more effectively from Secretary of State and Monsieur Barthou at Geneva.

My intervention in Vienna at a moment when Chancellor hopes within a few days to meet Secretary of State and Monsieur Barthou with a view to discussion of situation and its difficulties would I feel sure be misunderstood and accordingly fail in its purpose.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 71.

**No. 73**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 4, 8.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 105 Telegraphic [R 4885/37/3]*

PARIS, September 4, 1934, 6.45 p.m.

Your telegram No. 88 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

French Government agree and are sending instructions to their Minister at Vienna to take action in conjunction with Sir W. Selby.

It is understood that communication to be made to Austrian Chancellor will be semi-official and oral and that it will take the form of emphasizing the importance of consolidating her [?his] government by widening its basis.

French Government also agree to reference being made to Socialist leaders but they do not wish to formulate a special request for their release but to represent such release as a suitable consequence of a more liberal régime. As regards Prince Starhemberg they prefer not to mention his attitude in the course of the proposed démarche at Vienna but to reserve it for suitable opportunity during the presence of the Chancellor at Geneva.

Repeated to Rome and Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> No. 71.

No. 74

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 4, 8.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 106 Telegraphic [R 4886/37/3]*

PARIS, September 4, 1934, 6.50 p.m.

My telegram No. 238 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs tells me that they learn that Austrian Chancellor cherishes an idea of Powers according Austria some form of general guarantee of her integrity in conjunction with financial assistance, but does not wish to propose it himself at Geneva. He would like it to be put forward by one of the Powers themselves.

The Ministry wish you to know that the French Government are absolutely opposed to assuming any such initiative themselves. If proposal is made by Dr. Schuschnigg himself, they are ready to consider it on its merits but in their opinion its whole object will be defeated if it is advanced by France or indeed by any other Power except Austria herself, as it would be interpreted in Germany as entirely due to outside initiative.

*Confidential.* Attitude of French Government as described above conflicts with impression which I derived from my previous conversation as reported in paragraph 4 of my telegram No. 238 Saving. It is possible that French Government after further reflection have decided that it would be wiser to avoid initiative.

Repeated to Rome and Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> No. 70.

No. 75

*Memorandum on the Saar question which is down for discussion on the Agenda of the Council of the League at its forthcoming meeting<sup>1</sup>*

[C 6039/74/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE

On May 15th last the Council Committee of Three consisting of Baron Aloisi, the Chairman, Señor Cantilo (Argentine) and Señor de Madariaga (Spain) submitted to the Council a preliminary report concerning the organisation of the plebiscite in the Saar territory.<sup>2</sup> On June 2nd the Com-

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum, prepared in the Central Department and filed in the Foreign Office on September 10, is unsigned and undated. It appears to have been completed on September 3 or 4. The reference is to the 81st session of the Council of the League of Nations which began on September 7, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Article 49 of the Treaty of Versailles provided that 'Germany renounces in favour of the League of Nations, in the capacity of trustee, the government of the territory [of the Saar Basin] defined above [in Article 48]. At the end of fifteen years from the coming into force of the present Treaty [on January 10, 1920] the inhabitants of the said territory shall be called upon to indicate the sovereignty under which they desire to be placed.' Baron Aloisi



mittee submitted a further report to the Council.<sup>3</sup> This report, which is described in some detail below as it settled a number of outstanding questions and made a number of important decisions, was printed in the Foreign Office in the Central (Germany) Series, June 6th, Section 1. A copy of the print<sup>4</sup> is annexed to this memorandum.

2. Annexed to the report are letters<sup>5</sup> exchanged between the Chairman of the Council Committee of Three and the French and German Governments whereby the latter on June 2nd, without prejudice to the measures which the Council would have to take in virtue of Paragraph 39 of the Annex to Article 50 of the Treaty of Versailles, gave a firm undertaking to abstain from pressure of any kind, whether direct or indirect, likely to affect the freedom and trustworthiness of the voting; to abstain from taking any proceedings or making any reprisals or discrimination against persons having the right to vote as a result of their political attitude in connexion with the purpose of the plebiscite during the administration of the League of Nations; and to take the necessary steps to prevent or punish any action by their nationals contrary to those undertakings. Should any differences arise between either of the two Governments and a member of the Council of the League concerning the application or interpretation of these two undertakings, the two Governments agreed that such differences should be brought before the Permanent Court of Arbitration in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention of October 18, 1907, for the pacific settlement of international disputes. The two governments further agreed that for a transitional period of one year as from the establishment of the final régime the Supreme Plebiscite Tribunal should be maintained on certain conditions which are set forth in the exchange of letters.

3. The report of the Committee of Three put forward certain resolutions<sup>6</sup> which were adopted with the report by the Council of the League on June 4th. These resolutions were that:

(1) the Council notes the declarations made by the German and French Governments concerning the execution of the obligations resulting from paragraph 34 of the Annex to Article 50 of the Versailles Treaty and reserves the right to examine in due course, on the basis of paragraph 39, the conditions under which the benefit of the undertakings given by the

(cf. No. 68, note 3), Italy's representative on the Council of the League of Nations and the League's *rapporteur* on Saar matters, and M. Cantilo and M. Madariaga were asked by the Council at the public session of January 20, 1934 (see *L/N.O.J.*, February 1934, pp. 161-3) to prepare a report on the various problems raised by the provisions concerning the plebiscite set out in chapter iii of the Annex to Article 50 [Saar Statute] of the Treaty of Versailles. Their preliminary report of May 15, 1934, is printed in *L/N.O.J.*, June 1934, pp. 644-6. A detailed account of the Plebiscite Commission is given in *The Saar Plebiscite* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1940) by Dr. Sarah Wambaugh, technical adviser to, and deputy member of, the Commission.

<sup>3</sup> See *L/N.O.J.*, June 1934, pp. 647-50.

<sup>4</sup> The reference is to selections of official correspondence printed in the Foreign Office for confidential circulation. The Committee of Three's further report is not here printed.

<sup>5</sup> See *L/N.O.J.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 651-3.

<sup>6</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 648.

two Governments in the above-mentioned declarations as regards voters could be extended to inhabitants of the Saar Territory who do not possess the right to vote;

(2) the Council will see that these undertakings are fulfilled, this being regarded by it as an essential condition of the plebiscite;

(3) the Council fixes Sunday, January 13, 1935, as the date of voting.

4. Further resolutions adopted by the Council included the constitution of a Plebiscite Commission having powers of organisation, direction and supervision in regard to the plebiscite and powers to appoint and dismiss the staff, local or foreign, necessary for the performance of its duties. Other duties and powers of the Plebiscite Commission are set out in Section II(1)(a) of the report. Further resolutions adopted by the Council concerned regulations for the plebiscite (Section II(1)(b)); fixed the date on which the Plebiscite Commission would enter on its duties as<sup>7</sup> July 1st, 1934 (Section II(1)(c)); defined the judicial measures necessary during the plebiscite and authorised the constitution of a Supreme Plebiscite Tribunal<sup>8</sup> and eight divisional tribunals (Section II(2)(a)(b) and (c)); and made arrangements for the financing of the plebiscite by grants from the French and German Governments and the Governing Commission.

5. As regards the measures necessary for the maintenance of public order (Section II(3)) the Council laid down that the Governing Commission remained responsible for the maintenance of order in the territory in all circumstances and authorised it to increase the local police and gendarmerie forces during the plebiscite period. As far as possible the additional effectives were to be recruited from among the inhabitants of the territory. *Should, however, the Governing Commission consider it necessary to recruit outside the territory the Council through its Committee would lend its full support for the purpose.* The expenditure necessitated by the strengthening of the local police and gendarmerie was to be charged to the plebiscite expenditure fund.

6. Since the presentation of this report of June 2nd and its adoption by the Council on June 4th, we have heard nothing of any further labours of the Committee of Three who may however present a further report to the Council at the forthcoming meeting. It must, however, be mentioned in connexion with that part of the report of June 2nd dealing with the maintenance of public order in the Saar that the Chairman of the Governing Commission<sup>9</sup> on August 3rd addressed a letter<sup>10</sup> to the Council of the League

<sup>7</sup> *Note on original:* '(1) The Plebiscite Commission entered on its duties on the day appointed. Its membership consists of M. Henry (Swiss), M. de Jonghe [Jongh] (Netherlands) and M. Rodhe (Swedish) with Miss Sarah Wambaugh (United States of America) as technical adviser.'

<sup>8</sup> *Note on original:* '(2) It is understood that the Supreme Plebiscite tribunal entered on its duties on September 1st and that its president is Signor Bindo Galli (Italy) and its Vice President Mr. Justice Meredith (Irish Free State). The members of the eight divisional tribunals have also been appointed.'

<sup>9</sup> Mr. Geoffrey George Knox. Born March 11, 1884, Mr. Knox had held appointments in the British Diplomatic Service before being seconded for service as Chairman of the Saar Governing Commission on April 1, 1932. He was given the personal and temporary rank of

recounting the circumstances in which it had discovered documents proving the maintenance of close relations between the Saar Gendarmerie and the German Secret State Police and stating that the police force on which the Governing Commission could rely was very inadequate in numbers. The letter added that the Governing Commission had therefore taken steps to recruit locally among inhabitants of the territory a reinforcement of the local police and gendarmerie. These steps were unsuccessful and the Governing Commission would therefore have to have recourse to the recruitment of elements outside the territory, in the first place in the countries Members of the League where the German language is used, and it accordingly requested the Council to approach the States Members of the League as soon as possible in order to facilitate the end in view.

6 [*sic*]. His Majesty's Government have not yet been approached by the Council in connexion with the request of the Saar Governing Commission but we understand that Mr. Knox has been endeavouring to recruit reinforcements from Luxemburg and German-speaking Switzerland. He has so far received no reply from the Swiss Government to his approaches and he does not anticipate that he will be able to meet his requirements from this quarter. The press reports that on September 1st Mr. Knox addressed a further letter to the Council complaining of further acts of the German Government especially in connexion with the enrolment of Saarlanders in German voluntary labour camps and stating that 'the Commission cannot over-emphasise the immediate need for the Council to approach the States members of the League with reference to the recruiting of police and gendarmerie under the conditions prescribed by the resolution of June 4th 1934'. It is possible therefore that His Majesty's Government may shortly be approached by the Council in this matter.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile as a result of the publication of Mr. Knox's letter to the League of August 3rd a considerable number of British subjects applying to the Foreign Office for recruitment in the additional police and gendarmerie in the Saar have been informed that they should address their applications direct to the Saar Governing Commission. It may be mentioned here that the Saar Governing Commission have appointed a British subject Mr. Hemsley<sup>12</sup> as Ministerialrat in the Department of the Interior with powers of inspection of the gendarmerie and

Minister Plenipotentiary in the Diplomatic Service on June 16, 1932. His service under the League of Nations terminated on March 1, 1935, when he was made a K.C.M.G.

<sup>10</sup> See *L/N.O.J.*, September 1934, pp. 1140-6.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *The Times*, September 3, p. 12. According to a note of September 3 by Mr. Strang (Adviser on League of Nations Affairs), Mr. Frank Walters (an Under Secretary-General of the League of Nations) stated, during a visit to the Foreign Office on August 31, that no action had hitherto been taken by the President of the League of Nations with regard to Mr. Knox's letter of August 3 because 'the scope of Mr. Knox's request was not clear'. A letter of September 3 from the Secretary-General to members of the League of Nations called attention to Mr. Knox's letter of August 3 and invited them to lend the Governing Commission their full support in this matter (see *L/N.O.J.*, *op. cit.*, p. 1147).

<sup>12</sup> Mr. Arthur Cyril Hemsley was a former British vice-consul: at Frankfurt (1920-3), Stettin (1924-5), and Philadelphia (1925-6).

police. He does not exercise executive command and has nothing to do with the plebiscite or the extra police.<sup>13</sup>

7. With regard to the employment of British subjects in connexion with the work of the Plebiscite Commission we have informed the Secretariat of the League of Nations informally that while we do not want to give a definite ruling or impose a definite veto we should prefer that responsible posts including those, e.g. of kreiscontroleurs should not be held by British subjects, because Mr. Knox's Chairmanship of the Governing Commission already sufficiently engages our responsibility. We induced Sir J. Fischer Williams<sup>14</sup> in March last to stand down from service on the Plebiscite Tribunal which had been offered him. Meanwhile British subjects seeking employment in connexion with the plebiscite who approach the Foreign Office are requested to apply direct either to the Saar Plebiscite Commission, or to the Governing Commission as the case may be.

8. The following are matters which may come up for discussion at the Council Meeting or in which we are particularly interested:

(1) As mentioned above—the recruitment of additional police and Gendarmerie outside the Saar territory with a view to maintain order. In this connexion it is possible that in view of Mr. Knox's letter to the Council, the complicity of the German Government contrary to their undertakings in exercising pressure on the Saar population may be brought up for discussion. Attention may here be drawn to the monster demonstration held at Coblenz on August 26th at which Herr Hitler spoke urging the Saarlanders to vote for return to Germany and to which it is understood some 150,000 Saarlanders were conveyed in special trains.<sup>15</sup> Mr. Knox has pointed out to us that if the Governing Commission are unable to maintain order they have the right at their discretion to call in French troops. He sounded the French Government on this matter in the Spring and was informed that the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs and War were conjointly empowered without further consultation of the Cabinet to send in adequate forces of troops on the demand of the Governing Commission.

(2) Guarantees for minorities and special interests after the plebiscite.

(According to the press an aide-mémoire<sup>16</sup> on the Saar has been agreed on by the French Cabinet and will be laid before the Council by M. Barthou.

<sup>13</sup> *Note on original*: 'In view of the violence of the personal attacks on Mr. Knox appearing in the German press, unofficial enquiries were made of Major Abraham of the Secretariat as to the adequacy of the measures for the police protection of the members of the Governing Commission and in particular for Mr. Knox and Major Abraham has replied pointing out that the Commission itself is naturally responsible for the problems of police protection and that the matter is not one on which the Secretariat can form an opinion or in which it can intervene in any way.'

<sup>14</sup> Sir John Fischer-Williams had been British Legal Representative on the Reparation Committee, 1920-30.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *The Times*, August 27, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> The text of this aide-mémoire, dated August 31, is printed in *L.N.O.J.*, October 1934, pp. 1185-7.

It is believed that this aide-mémoire will deal with the security of the 15,000 Frenchmen in the territory; the security of the French owned mines in the Saar; provision for future trade relations between France and the Saar to be defined before the plebiscite and provision for the repayment to France of some 1,200,000,000 francs of currency now circulating in the territory in the event of the territory reverting to Germany).

9. With regard to (2) it may be said that the general consensus of legal opinion is that the Council has no power to impose guarantees on the German Government. The French may take the opposite view and it was therefore felt, when this question was reviewed in the Foreign Office before the May meeting of the Council, that we should endeavour to have the matter dealt with by the Plebiscite Commission or by the Committee of Three though the latter it was thought might not dare to raise the question. Questions of social insurance and war pensions after the plebiscite are likely to be settled satisfactorily between the French and German Governments direct.

Special cases under (2) in which His Majesty's Government are interested are:

- (a) the Saarbrücken Loan of 1928<sup>17</sup> and the commercial interests of Messrs. Burt, Boulton and Haywood Limited.<sup>18</sup>

It has been decided with regard to this matter that a memorandum on the subject shall be handed informally to Baron Aloisi, the Chairman of the Committee of Three, with the idea that the Council Committee shall look into the matter when they are considering the problems raised by Article 39 of the Saar Annex. (A copy of the memorandum<sup>19</sup> is annexed).

- (b) Position of Jews in the Saar.

On April 3rd last a letter<sup>19</sup> was sent to the Joint Foreign Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies and Anglo-Jewish Association informing them that His Majesty's Government appreciated their concern as regards the provision of some security for the rights of the Jewish population in the Saar if the territory after the plebiscite did not maintain its present form of Government and that in that event His Majesty's Government as a member of the Council which would have to take the decision as to the future of the territory would be ready to give sympathetic consideration to any proposals which might be put forward at that time with the object of securing protection for the Jewish minority. At the same time the Foreign Office pointed out the difficulties connected with the right of the Council under Sections 35 and 39 of the Saar Annex to insist on minority stipulations. A copy of the Joint Foreign Committee letter was sent to the Secretariat. Our view remains as stated in that letter.

<sup>17</sup> This loan, approved by the Saar Governing Commission, was payable by the City of Saarbrücken in sterling over a period of 25 years from October 1, 1928.

<sup>18</sup> This British company was due to receive half-yearly payments on a commercial transaction until December 31, 1939.

<sup>19</sup> Not printed.

No. 76

*Sir J. Simon to Sir W. Selby (Vienna)*  
*No. 70 Telegraphic [R 4885/37/3]*<sup>1</sup>

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 5, 1934, 3.30 p.m.*

Your tel. no. 113.<sup>2</sup>

I appreciate your point, but since instructions have now been sent to your French colleague—see Paris tel. no. 105<sup>3</sup>—you should act with him on the lines agreed to by the French Govt.

There will be an opportunity of reinforcing your representations when M. Barthou and I see the Chancellor at Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> Only the approved draft of this telegram has been preserved in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>2</sup> No. 72.

<sup>3</sup> No. 73.

No. 77

*Memorandum on the Proposal of the Saar Governing Commission to recruit an international Police Force for the Saar*<sup>1</sup>

[C 6062/74/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 5, 1934*

On June 4th the League Council adopted a Resolution authorising the Governing Commission of the Saar, if it wished, to increase the local police and gendarmerie forces during the plebiscite period.<sup>2</sup> The Resolution stated that as far as possible these additional effectives should be recruited from among the inhabitants of the Territory, but that should the Governing Commission consider it necessary to recruit outside the Territory, the Council, through its Committee (of Three) should lend its full support for the purpose.

On August 3rd the Saar Governing Commission addressed the League<sup>3</sup> on the subject of the desirability of reinforcing the Saar police, setting forth the inadequacy of the existing gendarmerie and announcing (the Saar member dissenting) that they were about to embark on an attempt to expand its numbers by recruitment abroad in view of the fact that the political etc. conditions in the Saar made local recruitment impossible. In the first instance recruitment might take place in those countries where the German language was spoken, and the Saar Governing Commission requested the President of the League Council to approach the Members of the Council with a view

<sup>1</sup> A minute of September 5 by Mr. Perowne says that this memorandum 'represents the conclusions that were reached at a meeting this afternoon in Mr. Eden's room' and that Mr. Strang took a copy to Geneva. Mr. Eden, Lord Privy Seal, was to represent the United Kingdom at meetings of the Council of the League of Nations, September 7-15, 1934 (cf. No. 75, note 1).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 75, paragraph 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, paragraph 6 and note 10.

to facilitating in the sense indicated the desire of the Governing Commission to expand its police force.

No action has, so far as we are aware, yet been taken by the President of the Council in response to this appeal by the Saar Governing Commission, as it is not at all clear what exactly it is that the President or the Governments are expected to do.<sup>4</sup> Neither is it clear whether Mr. Knox has yet made any attempt, as he informed Mr. Sargent privately that he proposed to do, to obtain recruits e.g. in Switzerland and Luxemburg. It is to be noted, however, that he anticipated that but little success would attend his efforts in this direction<sup>5</sup> and that he would in the long run have to come down on the Great Powers Members of the Council for assistance.

While the Members of the Council are no doubt bound by the terms of the Resolution of June 4th to lend their full support through the Committee of Three to the efforts of the Governing Commission to recruit outside the Saar Territory, it is impossible to foreshadow what form our assistance should take until Mr. Knox specifies his requirements. The War Office and Home Office are however being consulted as to what form facilities for the Governing Commission to recruit in this country could suitably take.

But whatever our obligations may be as Members of the Council under the terms of the Resolution of June 4th, there are many excellent reasons against the proposed recruitment of an *internationally* as opposed to a *locally* recruited police force in the Saar, and we should presumably at Geneva press Mr. Knox very hard for better reasons than those contained in his official letter of August 3rd to the League why the Governing Commission has apparently made no attempt at all to recruit among the inhabitants of the Territory itself, the Resolution of June 4th laying it down that so far as possible the additional effectives should be recruited from within the Territory itself.

It is obvious that a police force internationally recruited, even if only among German-speaking countries, will be a heterogeneous crowd; if non German-speaking elements are added, the confusion will be indescribable. There is no time in which to train elements recruited at this late hour or for them to become acquainted with the districts in which they are to exercise their functions. (The Saar is a notoriously difficult country, being a mixture of mines, industrial towns and forest). Such a mob would probably not only be useless, but even dangerous since its incompetence if it ever were called upon to act might aggravate rather than control a difficult situation. Its introduction into the Saar Territory at the present juncture might, moreover, well act as a strong political irritant and the minority opinion submitted by the German member of the Saar Governing Commission<sup>6</sup> with the

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, note 11.

<sup>5</sup> In a private letter to Mr. Baxter of August 24, Mr. Knox wrote: 'I am still awaiting a definite answer from the Swiss Government about my police, as I am particularly anxious for general reasons to make a start there. The moment was not propitious, with Motta [head of the Political Department (Foreign Ministry) of the Swiss Federal Council] absent and the Conseil fédéral dispersed on holidays: the delay thus entailed leaves too much scope for adverse propaganda, but needs must when the Devil drives.'

<sup>6</sup> See *L/N.O.J.*, September 1934, p. 1146.

Commission's letter to the League of August 3rd can be read as meaning that the Germans will see to it that trouble takes place if police recruitment is carried out outside the Saar, whereas things will be allowed to remain fairly quiet if recruitment takes place inside the Saar. It may be mentioned that the Swedish Chairman of the new Plebiscite Commission which took up its duties in the Saar on July 1st has expressed the view that Mr. Knox's decision not to recruit local reinforcements for the police is most unwise, and that he and some of the other members of the Plebiscite Commission feel so strongly about this that they propose to acquaint members of the Council with their views at the forthcoming meeting at Geneva.

In short, it would appear far better that the police force should as far as possible be expanded by local recruitment and that for the rest the Governing Commission should continue to rely, as heretofore, as the ultimate sanction in the event of an emergency on their right to call in French troops from across the border, only a few miles from Saarbrücken. Mr. Knox recently ascertained that the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of War had been conjointly empowered without further reference to the Cabinet, to send in adequate forces of troops on the demand of the Governing Commission. Further arrangements could no doubt be made if necessary to increase the number of troops in the frontier garrisons and to ensure that a proper number are always 'standing to'.

Unless a solution on these lines is obtained there is a real danger that the situation may so develop that we shall be faced not merely with a demand for facilities for recruiting in this country, but for the provision of actual British troops for police purposes on the analogy of the Upper Silesia Plebiscite.<sup>7</sup> This is all the more likely to occur in view of the force of the argument that with the best will in the world an international force recruited at this late hour can not possibly be expected to have reached a reasonable pitch of efficiency by the time its services will be needed. (Mr. Knox has never explained why he has waited until now to attempt to expand his police force as he was authorised to do by the Resolution of June 4th).<sup>8</sup>

There remains the question of the personal protection to be afforded to Mr. Knox. Owing to the incitements of the German press etc. it may well be held that Mr. Knox's life may be in some danger from fanatics, and His Majesty's Government may be considered to have a special responsibility to see that nothing that they can prevent should happen to him, even though he is in his present position a servant of the League and not of His Majesty's Government. The objections which exist against the recruitment of a large police force outside the Saar would not apply in the same way, perhaps, to

<sup>7</sup> For documents relating to this plebiscite, held on March 20, 1921, see First Series, Volume XI, Chapter I and Volume XVI, Chapters I and II.

<sup>8</sup> On September 6 Mr. Baxter reported a meeting at the War Office on that day which showed that some assistance to Mr. Knox from the British Government was contemplated. Sir J. Simon, who initialled Mr. Baxter's report on September 7, wrote privately on the same day to Sir Russell Scott, Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office, who subsequently confirmed that there appeared to be nothing in British law 'to prevent the Governing Commission of the Saar from seeking recruits for its Police Force in this country'.



the recruitment of a small personal bodyguard for Mr. Knox, and the advisability of his proceeding to this course might be impressed on him. Alternatively, Mr. Knox might be offered the services of 2 or 3 personal detectives from the Special Branch of Scotland Yard, if any are available. (A number of these are good linguists, some to our knowledge having attended Nazi meetings at the Nazi Headquarters in London). It may be doubted, however, whether Mr. Knox will welcome this suggestion, for he is not so much concerned, in attempting to expand his police force, with considerations for his own personal safety and that of other members of the Governing Commission, as for the maintenance of order and the prevention of intimidation during the period of the plebiscite.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See No. 103 below.

## No. 78

*Mr. Mack<sup>1</sup> (Prague) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 10)*

*No. 6 Saving: Telegraphic [C 6042/247/18]*

PRAGUE, September 6, 1934

It was officially announced in to-day's newspapers that M. Litvinov and Dr. Benes met at Marienbad on the 3rd September and that the object of the meeting was to exchange views in regard to the general political situation in connexion with the Eastern Pact and the forthcoming discussions at Geneva.

The meeting was a well-kept secret. Dr. Benes returned to Prague during the afternoon of September 3rd and the above announcement was only issued after he had left for Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> Acting H.M. Chargé d'Affaires at Prague.

## No. 79

*Letter from Mr. Knox (Saarbrücken) to Mr. Sargent<sup>1</sup>*

*[C 6066/74/18]*

SAARBRÜCKEN, September 6, 1934

Dear Sargent,

Papen<sup>2</sup> dined with me last night to have a talk before going to join the Party Congress in Nürnberg. Our conversation turned largely on the French memorandum<sup>3</sup> to the Council. I begged him when discussing this with the Führer to slide over the inevitable propaganda side of the document

<sup>1</sup> This letter was filed in the Foreign Office on September 10.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 10, note 2, and No. 59, note 7.

<sup>3</sup> Of August 31; see No. 75, note 16.

and to insist on its real value, namely that it left the door open to those direct negotiations which the Führer has himself consistently advocated. It would be in my opinion a grave mistake if Germany did not seize the opportunity to send a capable diplomatist, such as Lersner,<sup>4</sup> to Geneva where useful work could be done, if only in the 'coulisses'. He could count that I would on this occasion as on the last give any help in my power.

He welcomed this suggestion and went on to develop his own views about the future. He brought forward the astonishing proposal that in the event of a vote for a return to Germany, the present political regime should continue in force for two or three years. I do not know whether we will hear more of what at first sight seems a wild idea and I could not discover what, if anything, is at the back of his mind. He also talked, in the same hypothesis, of a continuance for a long period of the present customs regime but with the same vagueness and the same airy waving aside of obvious difficulties. For the first time he no longer professes to foresee a certain outcome of the vote and regards as a practical possibility—which must be contemplated—a decision for the statu[s] quo.

He proposed to return here after the Party Congress and will not rejoin his post<sup>5</sup> before September 20th.

On events in Germany he spoke with more freedom than at our last meeting. He told me that after his Marburg speech<sup>6</sup> everything went well until the races at Hamburg. There Goebbels turned up unexpectedly and when they left the grandstand he (Papen) had something of an ovation in the course of which there were shouts of long live 'Marburg'. From that moment Goebbels vowed vengeance against him. The Führer swore to him by everything he held holy that he never knew that anything was planned against the Vice Chancellor or his collaborators. He professes to believe this. For the rest he says that the Reichswehr has strengthened its position enormously, that Blomberg has common sense and will countenance no follies, and that the régime leaning on this prop is secure. He added nevertheless that he is sure that the day of Goebbels' downfall is not far off. To my question how the régime would stand if it lost such a pillar, he could only shrug his shoulders.

Yours ever

GEOFFREY KNOX

<sup>4</sup> Baron von Lersner had acted as Herr von Papen's personal representative at Geneva when the latter was Reich Commissioner for the Saar.

<sup>5</sup> As Minister on Special Mission in Vienna.

<sup>6</sup> The reference is to Herr von Papen's speech at the University of Marburg on June 17 in which he attacked the National Socialist regime.

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 7, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 116 Telegraphic [R 4947/37/3]*

VIENNA, September 7, 1934, 1 a.m.

Your telegram No. 70.<sup>1</sup>

My French colleague and I after consulting together made separate semi-official and oral representations to the Chancellor this morning.

I told the Chancellor that what I was about to say must be regarded as purely semi-official in character as His Majesty's Government had no wish to intervene in internal affairs of Austria. The situation however continued to cause anxiety to His Majesty's Government who were, as he was aware, in touch with French and Italian Governments, consistently with joint objective set out in declaration of February last.<sup>2</sup> In this connexion His Majesty's Government had learnt from Signor Mussolini that the latter had suggested to the Chancellor the expediency of his Government broadening the basis of its popular support by conciliating moderate pan-German and socialistic elements.<sup>3</sup> I was accordingly instructed to say that His Majesty's Government wished to associate themselves with these views.

I then said that the Chancellor would appreciate that the conciliation of socialists would have exceedingly good effect on British public opinion.

Could the Chancellor tell me what steps he contemplated taking to give effect to intentions announced in his speech at Innsbruck (see my telegram No. 112)<sup>4</sup> to liquidate February affair?

The Chancellor who received my representations in the friendliest manner said he appreciated the grounds on which His Majesty's Government had instructed me to approach him on what would appear to be a matter of purely Austrian concern. On his side he would be equally frank. Austria intended to respect peace treaties and to live up to her obligations as defined therein. He was doing his utmost to secure support of those elements who had not hitherto rallied to National Government. He then pointed to the history of Austria during the last 15 years to show that socialist party had consistently worked to destroy that national Austrian sentiment which his Government were determined to foster. Within limits necessary for achievement of this end Austrian Government had done everything possible to show clemency and their sole desire was to go further with a view to broadening their support in the country and to removing bitterness left by past strife. He had however little hope of finally alleviating existing conditions unless he could be relieved by the Powers of Nazi agitation from Berlin on the one hand and socialist

<sup>1</sup> No. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 9, note 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 71.

<sup>4</sup> In this telegram of September 3, not printed, Sir W. Selby had summarized the main points in Dr. von Schuschnigg's speech at Innsbruck on September 2 in which he outlined his Government's policy and announced that 300 Socialists would be released within the next few days.

agitation from Brno<sup>5</sup> on the other as, as things stood, His Government could not afford to relax their strict vigilance. So long as a virtual state of war existed for Austria a strong Government and strong centralised leadership were essential. If only the Powers could relieve Austria of this foreign pressure his Government could grant a comprehensive amnesty and proceed on most liberal lines and he believed reconcile and satisfy all parties within the framework of the new constitution.

In conclusion the Chancellor said that his Government could meet all eventualities within Austria provided they could be protected by the Powers from being overrun from without.

In thanking the Chancellor for his friendly reception of my remarks I expressed the hope that he would repeat his observations to you Sir at Geneva.

Full report of my conversation follows by despatch.<sup>6</sup>

Repeated to Geneva and Rome.

<sup>5</sup> Following the suppression of the Socialist disturbances in Austria in February 1934 an Austrian Social Democrat propaganda centre had been established at Brünn, under the nominal control of the Socialist leaders, Dr. Otto Bauer and Dr. Julius Deutsch (cf. Volume VI, No. 293, paragraph 12).

<sup>6</sup> Vienna despatch No. 184 of September 6, received September 10; not printed.

## No. 81

*Note by Mr. Sargent on his conversation with Prince Otto von Bismarck<sup>1</sup>  
on September 6*

[C 6064/74/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 7, 1934*

The German Chargé d'Affaires called yesterday in order to convey the views of his Government on the question of increasing the police force in the Saar. A similar communication had been made to the Italian Government. Prince Bismarck read copiously from a very voluminous despatch which he brought with him, but the substance of his remarks may be summarised as follows:—

(1) The German Government considered that the present police force was quite adequate to maintain law and order in the Territory (no reasons were advanced in support of this assertion).

(2) If, however, the police force was to be increased, it would be quite easy to enlist suitable men in the Saar district itself.

(3) The German Government would strongly deprecate any attempt made to enlist further police in foreign countries.

(4) If, as has been reported, the Governing Commission intends to recruit men in Switzerland, Luxemburg, and Czechoslovakia, the German Govern-

<sup>1</sup> Counsellor at the German Embassy in London, acting as Chargé d'Affaires.

ment trust that special care will be taken to see that these recruits are not drawn from the ranks of German émigrés resident in those countries.

I told Prince Bismarck that while everybody would naturally have preferred the extra police to be recruited locally, Mr. Knox had no doubt good reasons for reaching the view that in present circumstances this is impossible. At any rate Mr. Knox would be at Geneva and would give his reasons to the Council. As the German Government seemed to hold strong views on this matter it was regrettable that there would be no German representative to state them at Geneva.

Lastly, Prince Bismarck complained that Mr. Knox, in his attempts to recruit locally, had been ready to recruit local communists who had been willing to qualify by formally resigning from the party. I at once pointed out that here was an instance to show how particularly difficult it was in present circumstances for the Commission to recruit locally without arousing suspicions and complaints. Practically everybody in the Saar was by now a member of one or other of the political parties, and if the Commission recruited among the anti-Nazis their action would—as had been shown by Prince Bismarck's own remarks—at once call forth a protest from the German Government; while if they recruited from people who had been associated with the Deutsche Front, the French would at once say that the men were disguised Nazi terrorists.

I promised to bring these representations of the German Government to the notice of the Secretary of State before he left for Geneva.

O. G. SARGENT

## No. 82

*Mr. Patteson<sup>1</sup> (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 10)*

*No. 43 L.N. Saving: Telegraphic [C 6043/74/18]*

GENEVA, September 8, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

Italian representative presented a report to the Council this morning on the preparatory measures for the Saar Plebiscite.<sup>2</sup> After reporting that the Plebiscite Commission had duly proceeded to the Territory and that the Plebiscite Tribunal and District Tribunals had been constituted, he pointed out that certain new documents had been submitted to the Committee of Three which raised problems the examination of which appeared to carry the Committee beyond the mandate given it by previous resolutions of the Council. He referred in particular to the letters from Mr. Knox of the 3rd and 23rd August<sup>3</sup> and the French memorandum of the 4th September.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Consul at Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> See *L.N.O.J.*, November 1934, pp. 1390-1.

<sup>3</sup> See *ibid.*, September 1934, pp. 1140-6, and October 1934, pp. 1200-1. Cf. No. 75, paragraph 6.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably a reference to the French aide-mémoire of August 31; cf. *ibid.*, note 16.

French representative appreciated the reasons for which the Rapporteur had submitted this point to the Council. French memorandum had been inspired by desire to see the plebiscite carried out in strict accordance with the Treaty. The French Government in particular insisted that it should be effected in the conditions of impartiality and liberty guaranteed by the Treaty of Versailles. Certain abnormal incidents had only recently taken place in the Territory: he would say no more than that he trusted they would not recur nor grow more grave. Finally, he expressed confidence in the impartiality of the Council and in particular of the Committee of Three.

On the proposal of the President (Dr. Benes) Council adopted a resolution inviting the Committee to examine the new problems raised and in due course to report to the Council.

### No. 83

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 10)*

*No. 189 Saving: Telegraphic [C 6100/90/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, September 10, 1934

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

It seems to me very desirable that we should accept German government's offer to negotiate since otherwise a confused and unfavourable position for British trade is likely to arise from change of régime to which we can hardly object in itself. If negotiations are to be undertaken the sooner the better and since their scope may prove to be wide both on financial and on commercial side it is desirable that both Treasury and Board of Trade should be strongly represented. I should be glad to have early instructions as to reply to be given to Doctor Ritter's proposal.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This telegram, No. 188 Saving of even date (not printed), reported that Dr. Ritter, Director of the Economic Department of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had told Sir E. Phipps that 'the new devised régime would be announced in outline tomorrow and brought into force on 24th September', and suggested early negotiation on the application of the new régime to trade between the United Kingdom and Germany. See *The Times*, September 12, p. 12, for an outline of the new system of German foreign exchange control foreshadowed by Dr. Schacht in his speech at Leipzig on August 26 (cf. No. 60) and of which technical details were released to the German press on September 11. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 207.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ritter's proposal was accepted in Foreign Office telegram No. 176 of September 13 to Berlin, which announced that Sir Frederick Leith-Ross and Mr. T. St. Quintin Hill of the Board of Trade would be ready to meet the Germans in Berlin on September 19 in order to initiate discussions.

No. 84

*Sir R. Vansittart<sup>1</sup> to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 94 Saving: Telegraphic [C 6076/247/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 11, 1934*

My telegram No. 65 to Geneva of September 10. Eastern Pact.<sup>2</sup>

Please enquire orally at Ministry for Foreign Affairs what the French Government think of the German memorandum, and add that His Majesty's Government will be glad to be kept informed of any conclusions which they may reach as regards future developments.

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Simon had arrived in Geneva on September 9; cf. No. 30, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. It summarized the German Government's memorandum of September 8 containing their observations on the Eastern Pact proposals; cf. No. 85 below.

No. 85

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*  
*No. 1018 [C 6076/247/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 11, 1934*

Sir,

The German Chargé d'Affaires called on September 10th and communicated to Sir R. Vansittart a memorandum, of which a translation is enclosed herein,<sup>1</sup> regarding his Government's attitude to the proposals for an Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee.

2. Prince Bismarck said that the memorandum was also being communicated to the French, Italian and Russian Governments on September 10th, and to the other Governments concerned on the following day. The German Government did not at present intend to publish it, and the press would be informed only that a memorandum on the subject had been communicated to the Governments concerned.<sup>2</sup>

I am, &c.,  
(for the Secretary of State)  
C. W. BAXTER

<sup>1</sup> Not here printed. This memorandum of September 8 is printed as document No. 3 in Cmd. 5143 of 1936. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 190 and 200.

<sup>2</sup> According to a paragraph deleted from the first draft of this despatch Sir R. Vansittart 'suggested to Prince Bismarck that statements regarding the contents of the memorandum would inevitably appear in the press, and that it might be well from the German Government's point of view if they were to publish at least a summary of their observations'. Sir R. Vansittart told Sir J. Simon of this suggestion in Foreign Office telegram No. 66 to Geneva of 6.30 p.m. on September 10, not printed.

*Letter from Sir R. Vansittart to Sir J. Simon (Geneva)*

[R 4897/37/3]

FOREIGN OFFICE, September 11, 1934

My dear Secretary of State,

You will have seen Vienna telegrams No. 26 Saving<sup>1</sup> of September 2nd and No. 114<sup>2</sup> of September 5th, of which Carr will in any case have taken copies with him. With regard to the question of the Austrian Socialists, it now unfortunately seems only too clear that the Austrian Government have no intention of adopting an effectively conciliatory policy. Dr Schuschnigg may have told the journalists at Innsbruck that his Government was ready to make peace with the Socialists as soon as emigré Socialist propaganda ceased, but he was careful to add that he still had proof of the smuggling of propaganda and weapons into Austria, particularly from Czechoslovakia. It is, of course, true that some of the extremist Socialist leaders in Czechoslovakia are irreconcilable and prepared to cooperate even with the Nazis rather than with Dr Schuschnigg's Government. On the other hand, the latter do not seem willing to understand by reconciliation anything but their own attempts to win over, perhaps with the aid of some slight material concessions, the rank and file of the working classes to the Patriotic Front and the State Trades Union. Whatever their past mistakes may have been the Austrian Socialists are at least loyal to their leaders, and it seems quite impossible that any success can attend Dr Schuschnigg's policy. It is far more probable that the Socialist reaction will be that if they are to be bullied anyhow, they may as well suffer at the hands of the big bully, i.e. Nazi Germany, as of the little one. We have almost reached the point of thinking that the danger to Austria now comes less from Germany than from the shortsightedness of the present Austrian Government.

An almost equally disturbing symptom has been the campaign of calumny conducted by the Austrian 'Reichspost' against the Yugoslavs, whom it has accused of organising and maintaining an Austrian Legion in Slovenia, similar to the notorious Austrian Legion in Bavaria.<sup>3</sup> There has been a

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram, not printed, Sir W. Selby reported that the Austrian *Reichspost* had drawn attention to the account in the *Manchester Guardian* of August 30, 1934, of the press interview given by Dr. Julius Deutsch on his arrival in London and suggested 'that exceptional activity of Austrian Socialist party abroad should be taken into account by the Government in determining their attitude to certain personages of former clique of "Marxist" leaders in Austria'. Sir W. Selby added that the Government were obviously anxious to win the support of the 'labour classes' as a whole but considered that no reconciliation with the late leaders of the Socialist party was possible. He further reported that an 'article dealing with Yugo-Slavia suggests that attitude of that country is due to their unbroken "spiritual link with Radical Marxist party in Austria"'.

<sup>2</sup> In this telegram, not printed, Sir W. Selby summarized the significant points in a statement which Dr. von Schuschnigg made to journalists at Innsbruck on September 4 relating to the Government's attitude towards Austrian Socialists and declared that reports of Austrian refugees being organized on Yugoslav territory were unconfirmed (cf. No. 56).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Volume VI, No. 201, Appendix and No. 259, enclosure.



second article since the one mentioned in Selby's telegram No. 114<sup>4</sup> and the incident has given rise to a thoroughly mischievous three-cornered dog fight between Italy, Yugoslavia and Austria. The 'Reichspost' is generally regarded as being semi-official, but it is worth noting that the Austrian Government went so far as to thank the Yugoslav Government officially for their correct attitude during the Putsch both directly and through the Yugoslav Minister in Vienna, and that Dr Schuschnigg denied at Innsbruck the authenticity of the journal's charges. It looks, therefore, almost as though the 'Reichspost' were taking its orders (as no doubt also its subsidy) from Italy.

It had occurred to us that it might almost have been worth your while to take an opportunity of mentioning to Dr Schuschnigg the unfortunate impression created by the 'Reichspost' articles. We understand, of course, that you will probably be reluctant to tender more than a certain measure of unsolicited advice to him, and we feel that the point about the Socialists is far the more important of the two and, incidentally, the more likely to produce some effect. Even if you feel, however, that it would be best to save most of your ammunition for the latter, I still think that the former would be worth mentioning if an opportunity arose.

Yours ever

ROBERT VANSITTART

<sup>4</sup> See note 2 above.

## No. 87

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received September 13)*

*No. 45 L.N. Saving: Telegraphic [R 5048/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 12, 1934

Following from Secretary of State.

The Austrian Chancellor and M. Berger-Waldenegg<sup>1</sup> called this evening. The conversation was conducted mainly with M. Berger-Waldenegg, but the more important passages were translated to the Chancellor, who assented to them.

M. Berger-Waldenegg said that Austria was in a position to deal with any difficulties arising within the country, but could not cope with troubles coming from the outside. The economic situation was good, apart from the results of the two disturbances of the past year. The Austrian Government had been in touch with Signor Mussolini, and also, through the French Minister in Vienna, with the French Government, and they had come to the conclusion that what was required was some kind of security or mutual assistance pact. The Italian Government had discussed the matter with the French Government, and it was understood that M. Barthou was favourably disposed. M. Berger-Waldenegg very much hoped that His Majesty's Government would give their approval to the idea.

<sup>1</sup> Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I thanked M. Berger-Waldenegg for his explanation, and also for the distinction which was implied in his last words between participation and approval. His Majesty's Government were unable to participate in any guarantee, even if France and Italy did so. On the other hand, they were deeply interested in the maintenance of the independence and integrity of Austria, as I had publicly declared on more than one occasion. Since it was not contemplated that His Majesty's Government should participate in the Pact, any comments I might make should be taken merely as an indication of my friendly interest. But before saying anything further, I should like to have some details as to the type of Pact contemplated, and who would be the parties.

M. Berger-Waldenegg said that it was proposed that the Pact should be signed by Austria, France, Italy and Germany, if the last named would agree to come in.

I asked whether it was not proposed to invite other neighbouring States, such as Hungary and Yugoslavia. I had noted that certain apprehensions had been expressed about the attitude of Yugoslavia, and it seemed, therefore, particularly important that she should be brought into any Pact.

M. Berger-Waldenegg said that it was contemplated that Austria, France, Italy and Germany should be the original parties, but that any other States interested would be invited to accede to it.

I then asked him in what eventuality the guarantees foreseen in the Pact would come into play. Would the troubles of July 25th last,<sup>2</sup> for example, have brought the Pact into operation if it had existed at that time?

M. Berger-Waldenegg said that the Pact would only deal with cases of aggression from without. The troubles of July 25th had been an internal event.

The Chancellor here intervened to say that if outside Powers would leave Austria alone, all would be well. Security was wanted only against outside attacks. But without such security he did not see how Austria could preserve her independence.

I asked in what manner it was proposed to invite Germany to participate. Herr Hitler, on the occasion of the appointment of Herr von Papen, had spoken of his desire to re-establish good relations with Austria.<sup>3</sup> Even earlier he had declared his readiness to conclude pacts of non-aggression with all his neighbours,<sup>4</sup> including Austria. These facts would seem to offer a good basis for an invitation to Germany.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume VI, No. 528.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 10, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> A reference presumably to Herr Hitler's declaration to Sir E. Phipps in Berlin on December 5 and 8, 1933, that 'he would be ready to conclude pacts of non-aggression with all his neighbours for the space of ten years'; cf. Volume VI, Nos. 99 and 114. Earlier similar declarations had been made (a) on May 17, 1933, by Herr Hitler in a speech to the Reichstag in which he said: 'Germany is prepared to agree to any solemn pact of non-aggression' (cf. Volume V, No. 153 (p. 257) and *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. i, p. 454); (b) on October 14, 1933, in a Proclamation in which 'the German Government and the German nation' declared 'their readiness at any time, by the conclusion of long-term continental pacts of non-aggression, to guarantee the peace of Europe for the longest period, to serve its economic welfare, and to take part in the general cultural reconstruction' (cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. ii, No. 1).

M. Berger-Waldenegg said that, while it was intended to invite Germany, the value of the Pact did not depend entirely on her participation, and if she refused, the Pact would still be concluded with France and Italy.

In conclusion, I repeated my understanding that there was no request or proposal that His Majesty's Government should participate in the proposed Pact. All that was asked for was the good will of His Majesty's Government. I naturally could not give any answer until I knew more of the details of the Pact, but I could assure the Chancellor that I was sympathetic to any idea directed to the maintenance of Austria's independence. It was for this reason that I thought it particularly important that Germany should be induced to participate, and I also begged them to consider whether the participation of Yugoslavia would not also be of great value. I added that, since I understood that the Pact was only to provide security against external aggression, it would not in effect go beyond the terms of the Covenant;<sup>5</sup> but it was no doubt a gain to give these provisions a specific local application.

M. Berger-Waldenegg promised to communicate to me tomorrow the first draft of the proposed Pact, emphasising that it was at present in a provisional form and must be treated as confidential.

Earlier in the day Mr. Eden and I had seen Baron Aloisi, who had mentioned the proposal in more general terms. In explaining to him that His Majesty's Government regarded with sympathy anything designed to maintain the independence of Austria but could not participate in any Pact of guarantee, I particularly emphasised the importance which attached in the opinion of His Majesty's Government to the establishment of improved relations between Italy and Yugoslavia.

<sup>5</sup> Of the League of Nations.

## No. 88

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received September 13)*

*No. 247 Saving: Telegraphic [C 6117/247/18]*

PARIS, September 12, 1934

The German reply regarding the Eastern Pact,<sup>1</sup> a full summary of which was telegraphed from Berlin, has not received so much notice in the French press as might have been expected. The entry of the Soviets into the League has almost monopolised attention and is regarded as of much greater importance.<sup>2</sup>

2. Such comment as appeared last night and this morning describes the German reply as a definite refusal. Germany has given a fresh proof of her unwillingness for international co-operation. Bilateral non-aggression pacts

<sup>1</sup> See No. 85.

<sup>2</sup> For documents relating to the election on September 18, 1934, of the Soviet Union as a member of the League of Nations, see Volume VII, Chapter VII; see also *L/N.O.J.*, November 1934, pp. 1392-6 and *L/N.O.J.*, *S.S. No. 125*, pp. 62-69.

such as she advocates are no solution of the problem of security which can only be settled by precise regional obligations for mutual assistance.

3. Opinion as to the next step is divided. The view is expressed authoritatively and presumably officially by the 'Temps' that Germany's refusal should in no way compromise the signature of an Eastern Pact confined to Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic States which should remain open for subsequent accession by Germany. Poland, if she also refused, would incur a grave risk of sharing in world opinion responsibility with Germany for jeopardising peace.

4. Others, notably Vladimir d'Ormesson<sup>3</sup> in 'Figaro', declare that it was inevitable that Germany should refuse unless she was granted Gleichberechtigung in respect of armaments as a counterpart: it is hoped however that France will not now persist in attempting to create an Eastern Pact without Germany or even Poland. Such a pact would be nothing but a veiled Franco-Soviet alliance and that emphatically France did not want. The danger point in Europe at present was not so much in the East as in Austria. Let France concentrate now on the political and economic restoration of Central Europe.

Repeated Geneva Saving.

<sup>3</sup> Count Vladimir d'Ormesson was a distinguished publicist and contributor of special articles on international relations to the press.

## No. 89

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received September 13)*

*No. 248 Saving: Telegraphic [C 6118/247/18]*

PARIS, September 12, 1934

Your telegram No. 94 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

M. Léger said that German memorandum was still being analysed and studied and that neither French Government nor he had yet come to any conclusions as to line to be taken in reply.

Point that stood out was that everything was subordinated to demand for equality of rights in armaments and it would seem that henceforward discussions with Germany would be vain unless this was accorded from the outset.

His first recommendation to M. Barthou had been to take his time in answering and certainly not to do so before Polish reply had been received.

Although M. Léger did not say that he had actually made suggestion to M. Barthou, I gathered that he himself thought it might be possible, subject to Polish reply being satisfactory, to go ahead with pact without Germany but leaving place for her subsequent signature open.<sup>2</sup>

He undertook to keep me informed of conclusions of French Government.

Repeated Geneva Saving.

<sup>1</sup> No. 84.

<sup>2</sup> In a minute to this telegram Mr. Sargent wrote on September 14: 'Now that the Germans have killed the scheme, why should not the Poles leave it at that instead of going out of their way to kill it all over again?'

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received September 13)*  
*No. 190 Saving: Telegraphic [C 6136/247/18]*

BERLIN, September 12, 1934

Commenting on the German note relating to the Eastern Pact<sup>1</sup> to-night's 'Börsen Zeitung' says that the categorical rejection of the proposal has caused surprise, particularly in France, where it was hoped that world-wide anti-German propaganda would make the German Government nervous and amenable.

When the 'Matin', the article continues, declares that a system of mutual assistance in the East would be impossible without Germany and that one must either abandon the idea or conclude an alliance with Russia, it becomes clear that Germany's apprehensions are justified and that the pact represents the payment of Russia's debt for the efforts of the French Government to smooth the path of the Soviets to Geneva.

Even in England, the Government of which so warmly recommended Germany to capitulate before the proposal for an Eastern Pact, there is now perceptible a definite coolness towards the plan. A message from the Geneva correspondent of the 'Daily Express' is quoted to show that the hostile attitude of Poland towards the Pact has led France to abandon the hope of 'encompassing in this manner the encirclement of Germany'. This last phrase is the correct description of the Franco-Russian plan, and its acceptance would have meant the formal recognition of Germany's encirclement. The refusal of the German Government was thus inevitable.

The 'National Zeitung' says that international diplomacy is so accustomed to cloudy verbiage that it must have been surprised at Germany's categorical 'No'. In the old days even German diplomatists were afraid to say 'no' lest Germany should alone bear the odium of a refusal, but this is not the manner of National-Socialism. Germany cannot enter an agreement which brings her own nation into a war on the ground of the action of foreign Governments. In the matter of war a Government conscious of its responsibility must always decide for itself. Herein lies the essential difference between the French and German outlook. All French pacts rest on the basis of a war which is reckoned to be imminent or likely. Germany, however, bases hers on peace, for she wishes to exclude the possibility of war and to secure peace for decades. France proposed the pact, because she reckons with the outbreak of war; Germany rejected it because she desires peace.

The 'Volksparole' states that Germany's rejection of the pact will open the way for the conclusion of a military alliance between France and Russia, an alliance for which the Eastern Pact was only intended as a cover.

Other press comment is of little interest and is confined principally to repeating the arguments used in the German note. All the newspapers reproduce foreign press comment on German note.

Repeated Geneva telegram No. 14 Saving.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 85.

*Letter from Mr. Perowne to Mr. Strang (Geneva)*  
[C 5995/74/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 12, 1934*

My dear Strang,

You have no doubt seen a copy of League of Nations document C. 366. 1934.VII of September 1st, which is a letter from the Chairman of the Plebiscite Commission dated August 9th, 1934, to the Secretary General, complaining of the action of the Bishops of Treves and Speyer in sending a telegram to the late President of the German Reich in July last.<sup>1</sup>

Our view, which you may like to have, is that this was a foolish move on the part of the Plebiscite Commission, and that they will destroy the whole of their authority if they take up trumpery cases of this kind. It is of course regrettable if the Bishops did break the undertaking they gave to the Commission that the demonstration would be a purely religious one, but we hardly think that it is possible to argue that what the Bishops did constituted 'pressure likely to affect the freedom and trustworthiness of the vote' in accordance with the undertaking given by the German Government on June 2nd (see annex to the Committee of Three's Report to the Council of June 2nd, C.209.1934.VII).<sup>2</sup>

It looks as if the Plebiscite Commission intend to interpret this undertaking as forbidding all electioneering. If this is so, we are afraid that they will give the German Government ample cause for arguing that the whole plebiscite is being reduced to an absurdity. It is one thing to forbid the Germans and Saarlanders to intimidate and bring pressure to bear upon the voters, but it is quite a different thing to forbid the Saarlanders to express their own opinion openly, and this, after all, is all that the 50,000 young Catholics did on the occasion in question, or does the Plebiscite Commission wish to argue that the two Bishops used spiritual intimidation in order to force the young Catholics to subscribe to the sentiments voiced in the telegram? If so the Commission would seem to be embarking on very deep and dangerous waters which they will be well advised to avoid.<sup>3</sup>

Yours ever,

J. V. PEROWNE

<sup>1</sup> See *L.N.O.J.*, October 1934, pp. 1201-4, where the letter referred to above is dated August 24. A translation of the telegram as there printed reads: '50,000 young Saar Catholics of both sexes, gathered together round their spiritual leaders, the Bishops of Treves and Speyer, for the Catholic Confession of Faith Day at Saarbruck, send from the western marches of Germany their greetings and an assurance of unwavering fidelity to the Supreme Head of the German Reich.'

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.*, June 1934, pp. 651-2.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. R. C. S. Stevenson, a member of the United Kingdom delegation, wrote from Geneva to Mr. Perowne on September 20 to say that he had shown the above letter of September 12 to Mr. Frank Walters, who said that 'the [Plebiscite] Commission realises quite clearly that electioneering is inevitable and indeed necessary'. His personal opinion was that 'it was the Governing Commission, and most probably the French member thereof, that instigated the Plebiscite Commission to act as it did'. There was 'nothing much that he could do in the matter'.

## No. 92

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir R. Vansittart*  
(Received September 14, 9.30 a.m.)  
*No. 71 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5062/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 14, 1934, 1.15 a.m.

[Following from Secretary of State]

My telegram No. 45 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Austrian delegation have communicated rough draft<sup>2</sup> which provides that signatories recognize that any threat to independence of Austria is contrary to their interests and signatories other than Austria undertake to lend her their support in the event of that independence being threatened by any acts from beyond her frontiers directed against order and stability of her government. Monsieur Massigli<sup>3</sup> appeared personally to prefer formula of non-intervention such as that proposed by French Government in February last<sup>4</sup> in which His Majesty's Government might have joined but gave the impression that French Government had already promised Italian Government to participate in a guarantee. He was inclined to think however that this had better be negotiated outside Geneva.

He also expressed opinion that Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia should be invited to become original signatories whereas Italian and Austrian Governments contemplate that they should be invited to adhere subsequently.

Repeated to Vienna Saving.

<sup>1</sup> No. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Copy received in the Foreign Office on September 17 as enclosure in Geneva despatch No. 127 of September 14, not printed.

<sup>3</sup> M. Massigli, an Assistant Director and head of the League of Nations Division in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was a member of the French delegation at Geneva.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume VI, No. 277.

## No. 93

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon<sup>1</sup> (Received September 17, 1.20 p.m.)*  
*No. 50 L.N. Saving: Telegraphic [R 5095/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 15, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

My telegram No. 71.<sup>2</sup>

Monsieur Hornbostel<sup>3</sup> of Austrian delegation expressed to Mr. Carr to-day view that proposed pact need not contain any formal guarantee or promise of assistance. It would be sufficient if substance of declaration of February

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Simon returned to England from Geneva on September 15. Mr. Eden took over leadership of the United Kingdom delegation to the League of Nations.

<sup>2</sup> No. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Director of the Political Department of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

17th<sup>4</sup> were reaffirmed in the light of recent events and provision were made that if Austrian independence were again threatened Parties would consult at the request of Austria on measures to be taken. This would leave complete liberty of decision to Parties if and when emergency arose.

It became clear that Monsieur Hornbostel was throwing out these suggestions in the hope that if pact was sufficiently watered down His Majesty's Government might still be persuaded to participate in it. Mr. Carr said that as Secretary of State had explained to Baron Aloisi the United Kingdom delegation were unable to take part in these negotiations.<sup>5</sup> He was under the impression that public opinion in the United Kingdom would make it impossible for His Majesty's Government to participate in any fresh pact or declaration which would inevitably be interpreted as new commitment even if instrument were so drafted as not formally to increase their obligations. It would not be fair for him to encourage negotiators to water down the pact in order to meet United Kingdom views since it seemed probable that His Majesty's Government would in any case be compelled to abstain.

Conversation was private and informal but we may be strongly pressed by Austrians or French or both to agree to an attenuated pact on lines suggested. I propose to maintain attitude that we cannot participate in any fresh pact or declaration about Austria but might be prepared publicly to express our sympathy and approval of such a pact if concluded by Austria's neighbours.

Repeated to Vienna Saving.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 9, note 5.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 87, last paragraph.

## No. 94

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Ovey (Brussels)*

*No. 509 [C 6224/3279/4]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 15, 1934*

Sir,

During my stay at Geneva this week M. Jaspar has more than once spoken to me about his project to pay a visit to England later in the year. I had in mind your despatch No. 464<sup>1</sup> of August 31st on the subject. I told M. Jaspar that he would be sure of a warm welcome, but I endeavoured to ascertain from him what would be the concrete purpose of his visit. If he had the idea of coming to London merely for the purpose of renewing contact with British Ministers and conveying the impression of our good relations, that could certainly be arranged, but I said that I must warn him that in my judgment it would not be possible for His Majesty's Government at the present time to provide him with new assurances which he could take back to Belgium as the result of his mission. My parliamentary statement as to British interest

<sup>1</sup> No. 64.



in the integrity of Belgium and Mr. Baldwin's declaration in which he had used the striking phrase about the frontier of the Rhine<sup>2</sup> had, I knew, been duly noted not only in Belgium but in Germany. I thought it very improbable that in present circumstances further precision could be given or further advance made on this subject, and felt that it was my duty to warn him of this before he decided about his visit.

2. M. Jaspar thanked me for my frankness, which he said he regarded as a further proof of the reality of Anglo-Belgian friendship; he had hoped to resume and carry further the discussions which had taken place some time ago between M. Hymans and ourselves.<sup>3</sup> If, however, there was no prospect of his bringing back from his visit to London some new and concrete conclusion contributing to the protection of Belgium, he would not wish to make the journey and achieve a negative result. I told M. Jaspar that I thought this was a very wise attitude, for it seemed to me that, while we should much appreciate the pleasure of his visit, there was always a danger that third parties might draw unfavourable inferences if no solid achievement was announced. This might weaken rather than strengthen the effect of British declarations recently made and that was the last thing which we wanted. I suggested that M. Jaspar should, if he wished to pursue the matter, instruct the Belgian Ambassador in London to raise it again, and we parted in perfect amity on this understanding.<sup>4</sup>

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 26, notes 3 and 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 64, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> M. Jaspar's report of this conversation is printed in *D.D.B.*, vol. iii, No. 140.

## No. 95

*Letter from Mr. Roberts<sup>1</sup> (Paris) to Mr. Seymour<sup>2</sup>*

[C 6233/247/18]

BRITISH EMBASSY, PARIS, *September 15, 1934*

Dear Seymour,

Our telegram No. 248 Saving<sup>3</sup> of September 12 reporting Léger's first reactions to the German memorandum<sup>4</sup> on the Eastern pact.

I now enclose copy of a letter<sup>5</sup> which the Ambassador has since received from Léger containing the preliminary observations of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which the Ambassador showed to the Secretary of State on his passage through Paris this morning. You will notice that Léger points

<sup>1</sup> Third Secretary in H.M. Embassy at Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Private Secretary to Sir J. Simon. The date of receipt of this letter is not recorded.

<sup>3</sup> No. 89.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 85, note 1.

<sup>5</sup> This covering letter of September 14 is not printed. In it M. Léger referred to the enclosed memorandum as 'une note de réaction immédiate et sans caractère administratif, que j'adresse personnellement à M. Barthou'.

out that the memorandum<sup>6</sup> enclosed in his letter does not contain the considered views of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and does not commit the French Government or the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Yours ever  
F. K. ROBERTS

<sup>6</sup> See enclosure below.

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 95

*Copy of Note from M. Léger to M. Barthou relating to the German memorandum of September 8 on the proposed Eastern pact*

13 septembre 1934

Le Mémorandum allemand formule au sujet du projet de pacte de l'Est deux ordres d'objections:

I. — des objections de principe se rattachant à une question préjudicielle: la prétendue impossibilité pour le Gouvernement du Reich d'entrer dans aucun système de sécurité collective avant qu'un règlement de la question de l'égalité de droits en matière d'armement ne l'ait replacé sur un pied général d'égalité avec les autres Gouvernements;

II. — des objections particulières ayant trait aux dispositions mêmes du projet de pacte, aux obligations qu'il comporte.

En conclusion, et sous la réserve générale indiquée en fait d'égalité de droits, le Gouvernement allemand ne pourrait s'associer à la recherche d'aucun accord plurilatéral devant comporter plus que de simples engagements de non agression et de consultation.

Dans leur ensemble les idées énoncées par le Gouvernement du Reich ne sauraient fournir un terrain suffisant pour la conclusion d'un pacte utile, c'est-à-dire susceptible d'assurer les garanties de sécurité effective que nous jugeons indispensables.

Néanmoins, le mémorandum allemand repose sur une interprétation trop inexacte de notre projet pour qu'il n'y ait pas lieu d'indiquer les rectifications nécessaires, enlevant toute justification à sa conclusion. En tout état de cause, nous aurions toujours intérêt, sans nous écarter de notre conception générale, à montrer au Gouvernement allemand que la distance qui nous sépare n'est pas aussi considérable qu'il paraît le croire.

I

Les objections de principe reposent sur une interprétation abusive de la question de l'égalité de droit. Formulées plus explicitement, elles devraient se ramener à la proposition générale suivante: aussi longtemps que la question de l'égalité de droit en matière d'armement n'aura pas été réglée, l'Allemagne, se considérant comme discriminée et placée dans une situation d'infériorité, ne pourra se prêter à aucune collaboration, quelle qu'elle soit, de politique internationale.

Proposition évidemment excessive, car si c'était bien la position du Gouvernement allemand, elle lui interdirait l'acceptation aussi bien de pactes

de non agression et de simple consultation que du projet dont il est actuellement saisi.

Au demeurant, le Gouvernement allemand, qui évoque avant tout la question d'égalité de droit, ne peut contester que le projet de pacte de l'Est s'inspire précisément du principe de réciprocité absolue. Si un rapport pouvait être établi entre la conclusion du pacte et le règlement du problème des armements, la question de principe de 'l'égalité de droit' serait loin de se trouver infirmée par la négociation du pacte, puisque cette négociation, menée sur un plan de complète égalité, apporterait au contraire une preuve de plus qu'aucune idée de discrimination n'existe à l'égard de l'Allemagne.

La déclaration faite par le Gouvernement britannique d'accord avec le Gouvernement français et la déclaration postérieure du Ministre français des Affaires Étrangères suffisent à montrer que si un rapport pouvait être établi entre les deux questions, ce serait seulement la détermination de fait des possibilités engendrées par la conclusion du pacte, en tant qu'élément nouveau de sécurité, pour l'amélioration des chances de règlement de la question des armements [*sic*].

Ces déclarations spontanées suffiraient également à montrer que, dans une question où l'Allemagne s' imagine à tort être invitée à 'faire un premier pas', si une initiative pouvait être nécessaire, elle a été prise par le Gouvernement français.

Le mémorandum allemand fait observer que le projet suppose acquis un retour de l'Allemagne à la S.D.N. Le Gouvernement français n'a pas à dissimuler qu'il conserve fermement l'espoir de voir l'Allemagne reprendre sa collaboration active à la Société des Nations; il doit même à son tour faire observer, que pas plus que le retour de l'Allemagne à Genève, son retrait de la S.D.N. ne saurait être actuellement considéré comme acquis, car un délai de plus d'une année subsiste, au cours duquel les circonstances peuvent rendre sans objet les motifs que l'Allemagne a cru avoir de donner son préavis de départ.

## II

Les objections formulées à l'égard des dispositions particulières du pacte témoignent d'un souci critique qui apparaîtrait systématique s'il allait jusqu'à donner aux dispositions envisagées un caractère qu'elles n'ont pas.

1) Soutenir que la difficulté de réaliser des pactes de sécurité régionale n'est pas moindre que celle de conclure un pacte de sécurité s'étendant à tous les États, constitue une négation de tout ce qui a pu être réalisé au cours des dix dernières années. Le rédacteur allemand trahit lui-même sa gêne par le soin qu'il prend de présenter les accords de Locarno comme marqués d'un caractère exceptionnel.

2) En formulant officiellement le doute sur la fidélité des États aux traités qu'ils ont signés, le Mémorandum allemand introduit dans la conception des relations internationales une notion dont il n'a pas dû mesurer toute la portée. S'il entend insinuer que certains autres engagements ou certains intérêts pourraient l'emporter sur cette fidélité aux traités, il importerait qu'il s'expliquât à ce sujet.

3) Comment le Gouvernement allemand peut-il expliquer qu'il soit difficile de concevoir un pacte d'assistance mutuelle entre des pays inégalement forts? N'est-ce pas précisément l'assistance de pays tiers qui peut compenser une telle inégalité de fait et empêcher le recours à la force contre lequel le Gouvernement allemand lui-même déclare s'élever.

4) Le mémorandum allemand insiste à plusieurs reprises sur le caractère *automatique* et militaire de l'assistance que les contractants seraient tenus de se prêter. Il dénonce également la difficulté de s'entendre au sujet du bénéficiaire de l'assistance.

A la vérité le schéma de projet soumis aux Gouvernements intéressés ne prévoit nullement une assistance 'automatique': il indique seulement que l'assistance devrait être immédiate. Volontairement on a laissé à la négociation le soin de préciser le jeu de l'assistance. Et même, en indiquant que les pactes seraient établis d'après les principes de la Société des Nations, on a suffisamment marqué le rôle qui serait en l'espèce dévolu, comme il est normal, au Conseil de la S.D.N., tant en ce qui concerne la désignation de l'État auquel l'assistance serait due, qu'en ce qui concerne le jeu de l'assistance elle-même.

Au surplus, les précisions fournies par le Gouvernement français, en ce qui concerne sa propre assistance, montrent qu'en pareil cas le Conseil conserverait tout son pouvoir d'appréciation.

Enfin, la consultation préalable prévue entre les contractants constitue une garantie contre les risques imprévus d'un jeu *automatique* de l'assistance.

5) Le Mémorandum allemand demande quelle peut être la justification de la participation de la France dans un pacte régional auquel, géographiquement, elle n'est pas directement intéressée.

Il serait pourtant difficile de contester que la sécurité d'une région d'Europe constitue un élément de la sécurité générale en Europe. S'il a paru naturel que l'Italie apportât une garantie supplémentaire au pacte rhénan de Locarno, il n'est pas moins naturel que la France fournisse une garantie analogue à un pacte de stabilisation de l'Est européen, comme la Russie elle-même en fournirait une au pacte rhénan.

Que si, d'autre part, la garantie du Gouvernement français ne doit s'étendre qu'à l'Allemagne et à la Russie, le Gouvernement allemand ne peut ignorer, mention en étant faite dans les actes de Locarno, qu'une assistance est déjà assurée par la France à la Pologne et à la Tchécoslovaquie.

6) Le mémorandum allemand tend à dénoncer une politique de groupements de Puissances. Une telle notion n'entre à aucun degré dans la conception du Gouvernement français, qui n'envisage d'autre groupement que celui de pays, éventuellement solidaires contre telle Puissance qui recourrait à la force.

7) Le Mémorandum allemand s'inquiète de l'obligation où les États contractants pourraient se trouver de livrer passage à des groupes d'États co-contractants, apportant assistance au pays attaqué. Mais, en fait, pareille obligation se trouvait déjà inscrite dans un article du Pacte de la Société des Nations, et l'Allemagne ne l'a jamais récusée. Au surplus, tous les co-

contractants devant prêter solidairement assistance à l'État victime d'une agression, une telle facilité n'apparaît pas exorbitante.

8) Le Gouvernement allemand suggérerait un système comportant seulement la non-agression et la consultation. Conçoit-il que l'intérêt du maintien de la paix et le souci même de son propre intérêt puissent lui permettre d'assister passivement à un bouleversement politique dans une région l'avoisinant?

## No. 96

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 18)*

*No. 53 L.N. Saving: Telegraphic [R 5119/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 17, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

My telegram No. 50 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Carr has today had long conversations with M. Biancheri<sup>2</sup> and M. Massigli. The former communicated a draft text of the proposed Pact (full text<sup>3</sup> by bag) of which the essential provisions are as follows:—

*Article 1.* The signatory Governments (i.e. Austria, France, Italy, and, if possible, the United Kingdom and Germany) recognise that any disturbance coming from without and endangering the integrity or political independence of Austria would be contrary to the maintenance of peace in Europe.

*Article 2.* In the event of Austria complaining of acts of interference from without directed against order and security within the country, the Austrian Government will address itself to the other signatories in order that they may lend their assistance with a view to putting an end to this state of affairs. On receiving this appeal, the Governments will immediately take any measure which they consider appropriate.

The same Governments undertake not to tolerate on their territory any action directed against the established order in Austria. Other limitrophe States are invited to adhere to the agreement.

M. Biancheri pointed out that the terms of the draft left full opportunity to His Majesty's Government to decide what action would be taken if and when the emergency arose.

Mr. Carr said that he would, of course, submit this text to you. But in view of public opinion in the United Kingdom he felt doubtful whether His Majesty's Government would feel able to accept the proposal. You had informed Baron Aloisi that, if a pact were signed by the States principally concerned, you might be prepared to make some statement indicating your

<sup>1</sup> No. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary-General of the Italian delegation to the League of Nations Assembly and a substitute Italian representative on the Council.

<sup>3</sup> Received in the Foreign Office on September 19 as enclosure in Geneva despatch No. 131 L.N. of September 17, not printed.

sympathy and approval, but this was a very different thing from signing an instrument which would be interpreted as a new commitment and would, indeed, be valueless if it did not add something to the previous declarations or obligations of the signatories.

M. Massigli, while agreeing in substance with M. Biancheri's text, said that he would prefer to achieve the same thing through the framework of the League. (He used precisely the same language which had been previously used in conversation by the Yugoslav delegation and has no doubt been in recent touch with them.) He would have preferred that the matter should be referred to the Council by the three signatories of the declaration of February 17th.<sup>4</sup> The Council could then pass a resolution in the sense of Article 1 of M. Biancheri's draft. The resolution would then go on to invite members of Council and other interested States to consider what measures they were prepared to take to assist Austria to maintain her independence and to report to the Council on these measures.

Mr. Carr said that he would report this proposal for your consideration at the same time as that put forward by M. Biancheri, but it did not seem to get over all the difficulties inherent, from the point of view of His Majesty's Government, in the Italian draft.

M. Biancheri subsequently informed Mr. Carr that the Italian Delegation were opposed to any reference of the matter to the Council. He considered that, once the Austrian question was referred to the Council, it would be impossible to limit the scope of the discussion, and the public ventilation of the question would be full of danger. He mentioned in particular that he considered such a course was likely to produce a recrudescence of public controversy between Italy and Yugoslavia.

The position therefore seems to be as follows:—

(1) The Italian draft is, so far as I can judge, not acceptable to His Majesty's Government, and is not altogether welcome to the French Government.

(2) The proposal to bring the matter before the League is unwelcome to the Italian Government, and no initiative will therefore be taken by the Austrian Government. In these circumstances I presume that His Majesty's Government will not be prepared, even in conjunction with the French Government, to take the initiative.

(3) Fundamental difference between France and Italy turns on the position of Yugoslavia. Italy does not desire to place Yugoslavia on an equal footing with the Great Powers. France wishes to satisfy the Yugoslavs in this respect, and has put forward the proposal of reference to the Council as the simplest way of achieving this result.

In view of these divergent opinions and of the difficulty of accepting, so far as we are concerned, any of the proposals put forward, I can see no alternative to the position which we have already adopted, i.e. that if the neighbouring States can come to an agreement on any pact or declaration tending to maintain and reinforce the independence and integrity of Austria, we

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 9, note 5.

should be prepared to express our public sympathy and approval with this policy, but that we cannot ourselves participate in any such instrument.

Repeated to Vienna No. 4 Saving.

**No. 97**

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 19, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 75 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5129/37/3]*

*Immediate*

GENEVA, September 18, 1934, 8.30 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

My telegram No. 53 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Baron Aloisi came to see me this morning and spoke at some length of proposed consultative pact in respect of Austria. He maintained that the situation was exceedingly serious. He spoke of danger of war and he argued that pact if it was to be effective must include Great Britain amongst its signatories. Actual terms of the pact were capable of adjustment but he hoped for signature of France and ourselves and he would invite German co-operation. French Government seemed to prefer some declaration by Council of League but Baron Aloisi added that he had seen Monsieur Barthou this morning and that he was now convinced that Monsieur Barthou would co-operate in this pact. In any event Italian Government could not agree to limit their purpose to what might be achieved within framework of the League since they were anxious for German co-operation.

I repeated to Baron Aloisi that we could in no circumstances agree to be parties to a pact which involved new commitment for us in Central Europe. A consultative pact might not do so directly but moral obligation would still be there. Consultation if it was to have any meaning must pre-suppose readiness to take action. If this readiness did not in fact exist it was more honest in our judgment to refuse to be parties to the pact. If however the pact whether consultative or of mutual assistance could be agreed to between Austria and her neighbours then I felt sure that we should be prepared to consider possibility of making some declaration approving the policy of the pact.

Baron Aloisi was clearly not satisfied with this answer. I then pressed Baron Aloisi as to Italian relations towards Yugoslavia. If the pact were to be of any real value surely Yugoslavia should be invited to come in, in the first instance and not merely asked to accede as a lesser Power at a later stage? As to this I could obtain nothing from Baron Aloisi but vague assurances that Italy was anxious to improve her relations with Yugoslavia. He concluded with earnest appeal to His Majesty's Government to reconsider their attitude towards this pact. I could only tell him that I would report his appeal to you but that I had no expectation of any modification of our attitude.

Monsieur Barthou initiated a conversation on this same subject this afternoon. 'Is there anything,' he asked, 'we can do to meet Baron Aloisi's

<sup>1</sup> No. 96.

apprehensions?' Monsieur Barthou did not pretend to like Italian proposal. He agreed with me that it took too little account of Yugoslav susceptibilities and maintained that he would much prefer some declaration on lines of that of February 17 to which all Powers interested including Yugoslavia could be parties. He had the impression that Baron Aloisi, who was 'un homme terrible' when in pursuit of a definite objective, had been instructed from Rome to produce some kind of pact in defence of Austria as outcome of his visit to Geneva. Monsieur Barthou was prepared to help Baron Aloisi if he could but nature of that help had yet to be carefully considered and he fully appreciated our objection to any consultative pact. Monsieur Barthou went on to speak of his projected visit to Rome. Nothing had yet been decided upon. Even date was at present uncertain. He had no intention of going to Rome until certain important political issues between the two countries which were at present in negotiation had finally been decided. Before he did go Monsieur Barthou assured me he would give His Majesty's Government full account of policy and purpose of his visit.

I mentioned our concern at bad relations at present persisting between Italy and Yugoslavia. Monsieur Barthou replied that he fully shared our anxiety. They were indeed chief danger in Europe at present. He did not agree with Baron Aloisi in his fear of immediate danger of war but he was anxious as to the outlook next February if nothing was done to improve relations in the meantime. He himself had great confidence in King Alexander and would use latter's visit to Paris<sup>2</sup> to bring all possible pressure to bear in that quarter to improve Yugoslavia's relations with Italy. In the meantime he would have further interview with Baron Aloisi and report to me fully upon result.

It is clear to me that we are likely to be hard pressed by Italy in respect of this projected pact in the course of the next few days. I hope that the attitude which we are adopting is in accordance with your views.

Repeated to Vienna Saving.

<sup>2</sup> King Alexander of Yugoslavia and Queen Marie were due to begin an official visit to France on October 9; see No. 137 below, note 4.

## No. 98

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 19, 9.35 p.m.)  
No. 76 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5142/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 19, 1934, 8.17 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

My telegram No. 75.<sup>1</sup>

French Delegation have submitted to us draft of a Council resolution (text<sup>2</sup> by bag) regarding Austria which concludes with an invitation to the three

<sup>1</sup> No. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Received in the Foreign Office on September 21 as enclosure in Geneva despatch No. 136 L.N. of September 19, not printed.



Great Powers and to neighbouring States to make arrangements with a view to assure maintenance of Austrian independence by concerted action. Monsieur Massigli hoped that we might join French in putting pressure on Italian Delegation to accept this proposal. He was not given any reason to suppose that we could accept this draft or that we should be prepared to intervene in the matter.

Italian Delegation have since requested that you should be informed that this proposal is unacceptable to them.

Developments of last two days have made it clear that no progress can be made until French and Italian Governments have settled their differences as to manner in which Austrian situation should be approached. It seems increasingly doubtful whether such settlement can be reached except as part of a larger agreement between France and Italy. Austrian Delegation appear to be reconciled to nothing being done during the present assembly.

I propose to take the line that it is useless for French and Italian Delegations to approach us with further proposals unless and until they have reached an agreement between themselves. When they have done this we will consider what support we are able to give on terms already indicated by you. I trust you will approve this attitude.

Repeated to Vienna Saving.

#### No. 99

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 20)*

*No. 195 Saving: Telegraphic [C 6301/20/18]*

BERLIN, September 19, 1934

The American Ambassador has just called upon me and tells me that, being much perturbed at reports he has lately been receiving from American Consuls, etc., in Germany regarding warlike intentions and preparations, he attacked Dr. Schacht on the subject yesterday.

Mr. Dodd conveyed to Dr. Schacht some of his fears as to Germany's warlike intentions and remarked that if those fears were in any way grounded there would be no question of the United States entering into any kind of financial or economic negotiations with the German Government.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Schacht seemed much upset by this declaration and maintained emphatically that Hitler and the German Government would on no account allow war to break out. If any attempt should be made to use force against Germany, the German Government would merely summon an international conference. Dr. Schacht admitted, however, that internal propaganda had been perhaps overdone and had resulted in seemingly warlike mentality amongst the youth of the country.

Mr. Dodd tells me that his Consul at Stuttgart reports that orders have been placed for the immediate manufacture of 600 railway trucks for the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Foreign Relations of the United States (F.R.U.S.)* 1934, vol. ii, pp. 434-44.

transport of troops, the wheels, etc., to be made at or near Stuttgart and the bodies of the trucks at Berlin.

It is doubtless excellent that Mr. Dodd should have spoken straight out to Dr. Schacht, but he is always inclined to take a too pessimistic view of the near future.

**No. 100**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 20)*

*No. 1144 [C 6312/20/18]*

BERLIN, September 19, 1934

His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit to him the under-mentioned documents.

<i>Name and Date</i>	<i>Subject</i>
From: British Consulate General, Munich, No. 158 of the 27th August, 1934.	Establishment of Gruppenkommando III at Munich or Nuremberg.

ENCLOSURE 1 IN No. 100

*Mr. Gainer<sup>1</sup> (Munich) to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 158*

MUNICH, August 27, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit, for the information of the Military Attaché, a memorandum<sup>2</sup> upon certain military matters, drawn up by Mr. Vice Consul Phillips.

I have, &c.,  
D. ST. CLAIR GAINER

ENCLOSURE 2 IN No. 100

MUNICH, August 27, 1934

*Memorandum*

There has been some conversation during the past nine months relating to the establishment of Gruko (Gruppenkommando) III at Munich or Nuremberg but there is no evidence as yet that a decision has been taken. It is proposed to transfer 'Wehrkreis' No. VII, whose headquarters are at Munich and at present under the control of 'Gruppenkommando II' at Kassel, together with other 'Wehrkreise' still in process of formation, to the administration of 'Gruppenkommando III', either at Munich or Nuremberg.

2. According to my information the Reichsheer organisation still remains divided into Gruppenkommandos I & II at Berlin and Kassel, the former

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Consul-General at Munich.

<sup>2</sup> Enclosure 2 below.

comprising 'Wehrkreise' 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the latter 5, 6 and 7. The staff for the proposed Gruppenkommando III has however already been appointed.

3. The 'Wehrkreise', each comprising three infantry regiments, are as follows:—

- No. 1. East Prussia
2. Pomerania
3. Brandenburg-Silesia
4. Saxony-Thuringia
5. Wurttemberg-Hessen-Nassau
6. Westphalia-Hannover
7. Bavaria

4. It is reported that numerous recruits are being accepted for a probationary twelve months service and at the end of that period, if willing and satisfactory, permitted to enlist for long time service.

5. I also understand that large contracts for the supply of tractors have been placed by the Army authorities and that out of every twelve manufactured in Germany, ten are destined for military use.

6. 1000 motor cycles are to be delivered to the military depôts by the Bayerische Motorenwerke, Munich, during the month of October.

7. Armoured plates for light and heavy tanks are being manufactured by the Krauss-Maffei factory at Allach near Munich. There is however no evidence that a finished product has been put into service. The extension of these works has already been reported.

8. The latest report from Lager Lechfeld near Augsburg refers to the construction of subterranean munition stores. The number is given at [?as] 12 and the size 6 by 8 metres.

9. Certain retired and<sup>3</sup> officers on the reserve at Munich have been advised to hold themselves in readiness for re-instatement in the Active List, upon the further expansion of the Reichsheer forces in the near future.

10. It is impossible to obtain accurate confirmation of the above reports but there appears no reason to doubt their general accuracy.

C. J. PHILLIPS

<sup>3</sup> This word presumably should have read 'army'.

## No. 101

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*

*No. 81 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5142/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 20, 1934, 9.10 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 50 L.N. Saving,<sup>1</sup> 53 L.N. Saving,<sup>2</sup> 75 L.N.<sup>3</sup> and 76 L.N.<sup>4</sup> Following for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart.

It seems to me to be a complete misnomer to describe the draft Pact in your despatch No. 131<sup>5</sup> as 'consultative'. The word 'consultation' does not once

<sup>1</sup> No. 93.

<sup>2</sup> No. 96.

<sup>3</sup> No. 97.

<sup>4</sup> No. 98.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 96, note 3.

occur in the text, and the operative part of the Pact merely provides that the signatories shall, when appealed to by Austria, take whatever measures they consider suitable in order to defend Austrian independence. This would be open to objection that the Italians might conceivably or justifiably take this to mean that the other signatories had given them *carte blanche* to send Italian troops into Austria in any crisis. Be that as it may the real trouble would be that in any case this would certainly be the interpretation which Yugoslavia would put upon it, and I am inclined to think therefore that if signed in this form without Yugoslavia the Pact would not merely be valueless but would be actually dangerous, inasmuch as it would constitute a direct provocation to Yugoslavia. Indeed, I do not even see how in these circ[umstance]s we could well advise H.M. Government to give it their blessing.

The truth of the matter as it seems to me is that the Pact, if a suitable one could be devised, should be drawn up in consultation between all the neighbours of Austria (except Switzerland). If any of them declined to agree to it, for instance Germany, the question would then arise as to whether it should be concluded without that particular Power. But the essential point is that every one of the neighbours should have a share in negotiating the Pact and not have it flung at their heads ready-made after it has been signed by France and Italy.

The French counter-scheme mentioned in your telegram No. 76<sup>4</sup> certainly seems to be more satisfactory than the present Italian draft, but I agree with you that for the present we had better keep out of these Franco-Italian negotiations and adopt, for the time being at any rate, the line indicated in the last two paragraphs of your telegram No. 76.

Indeed, the whole question is so delicate and so fraught with serious consequences that I would suggest that you should urge both parties to proceed slowly and with the utmost caution and not attempt to rush through some ill-considered scheme merely in order to be able to show that they have been able to reach a decision while at Geneva. In order to reinforce these delaying tactics you could point out that it is impossible for you to obtain the views of H.M. Government until next week, since the Secretary of State is away from London and the Cabinet does not meet until the 25th. In the meantime I would suggest that you should maintain your present attitude and hold out no hopes that H.M. Government will reconsider their position as regards participation in any Pact, however much it may be watered down. I think you might indeed go further and take the line that you are doubtful whether H.M. Government would think it wise or politic in the general interest—including Italy's—to approve publicly any agreement regarding Austria into which Yugoslavia was not brought from the outset on a footing of equality. Some caution would however be necessary in this, as we naturally should not wish our response to Italy to appear too uniformly unpalatable.

I appreciate that this reserved attitude may be criticised at Geneva as unhelpful and unconstructive and draw upon us a certain amount of odium, not only in Austria but in Italy. We all, of course, have a vital interest in not discouraging either of them too far. I am therefore turning over in my mind

whether at a suitable moment we might not put forward some alternative of our own, but this must depend upon the decision of the Secretary of State, to whom the whole question is being submitted in anticipation of next week's Cabinet. I expect to see him on Monday.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> September 24. The first draft of this telegram concluded with the following additional paragraph: 'In this connexion do you consider it would be of any use our suggesting a self-denying declaration on the lines of that drafted last February (text of which was contained in the memorandum [not traced in Foreign Office archives] on the Austrian question of the 5th Sept. which the Delegation took with them to Geneva)? Or, as another alternative, do you think there would be any possibility of a settlement on the basis of an agreement between the signatories of the Declaration of Feb. 17th to the effect that, in order to implement the policy contained in that Declaration, the signatories undertake to consult together and with such of the limitrophe States of Austria as are prepared to co-operate, with a view to taking action in accordance with the Covenant of the League of Nations?'

A minute of September 20 by Mr. Sargent read: 'This question was discussed with Sir E. Drummond [cf. No. 1, note 1] this morning, and it was agreed that a telegram should be sent to Mr. Eden on the lines of the accompanying draft [i.e. Foreign Office telegram No. 81 L.N. printed above]. Sir Eric felt sure that the Italians would not accept the "self-denying ordinance".' For His Majesty's Government's denial of February 9 of any intention of interfering in the internal affairs of another country, see Volume VI, No. 265; cf. also No. 9 above, note 5.

## No. 102

### *Letter from Sir R. Vansittart to Sir W. Selby (Vienna)*

[R 5179/37/3]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 20, 1934*

<sup>1</sup>Many thanks for your letter of September 12th.<sup>2</sup>

I still feel that, somehow or other, we are at cross purposes, not as regards the fundamental aims of our policy towards Austria (there can be no two opinions about that), but as regards the means which we can most usefully employ to give that policy practical effect.<sup>3</sup> Your letter of August 29th<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The formal opening and ending of this letter are not recorded on the filed copy which is the approved draft.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed, see notes 5 and 11 below.

<sup>3</sup> Letters had recently been exchanged between Sir W. Selby and Sir R. Vansittart on developments in Austria. In a letter of August 6, Sir W. Selby had outlined the attitude of his diplomatic colleagues in Vienna and concluded: 'It is the problem of Austria and the continuing state of war between Germany and Austria, which is throwing all Central Europe into turmoil, and constitutes one of the main contributory causes to lack of progress in the direction of pacification and to the darkening economic clouds over Central Europe as a whole.'

In his reply of August 20, Sir R. Vansittart referred briefly to the attempts that were being made 'to get agreement among the three principal Powers concerned as to the advice to be proffered to the Austrian Government in regard to broadening its basis'. He said that at the moment of writing, he was more than doubtful 'whether Mussolini will see and act along precisely the line we wish', and remarked, in his final paragraph: 'But the facts of the case

[Footnotes 3 and 4 continued on next page]

suggested, or appeared to suggest, that my dictum that 'Austrian initiative and Austrian independence must sink or swim together' represented a change in the policy of H.M. Government, which might even form the subject of a public pronouncement. On the contrary, I think that if you will review carefully in your mind the events of the past year, you will see that our policy has followed a line of undeviating straightness. Unfortunately, however, when it has come to considering ways and means, geography and the attitude of the other Government Departments concerned have combined to a large extent to tie our hands in pursuing that policy as actively as we should have liked.

If the Austrian Chancellor—or for that matter anyone else in Vienna—thinks that we are not giving Austria the maximum amount of support of which we are capable in the circumstances, this is, as you suggest, most unfair, and short memories, whether they like it or not, will have to be jogged.<sup>5</sup> We have lent Austria more money at a lower rate than anyone else, and we are about to carry out a conversion operation<sup>6</sup> which neither Paris nor New York could carry out even if they had the will—which I very much doubt.

In this connexion you will see from the enclosed record of a conversation between Niemeyer and Eden<sup>7</sup> that the financial situation is by no means so bad as it has been made out to be. And quite recently I have been pressing the Board of Trade to see if we cannot now take from Austria some of the goods which we at present buy from Germany. More than this we cannot do.

But it is over the question of the Austrian 'initiative' that we seem to be most completely at cross-purposes, and in this neither our policy nor its

(even apart from the political situation here) impress upon me at least that Austrian initiative and Austrian independence must sink or swim together.'

Further correspondence followed: Sir W. Selby's letters of August 29 and September 12 (see notes 4, 5, and 11) and Sir R. Vansittart's letter of September 3 (see notes 4 and 8).

<sup>4</sup> In this letter of August 29 Sir W. Selby had said that he had endeavoured throughout 'to emphasise the point that the maintenance of Austrian independence depended in the main on the policy of the Powers and not on Austria'. He was satisfied that His Majesty's Government's present policy in its main lines was the right one but he was 'forced to recognise it is robbed of all chance of success if the indications' in Sir R. Vansittart's letter of August 20 'correctly represent the outlook of H.M. Government'. To this, Sir R. Vansittart had replied, in his letter of September 3: 'I do not think, and never have thought, that Austrian initiative *alone* will suffice to safeguard her independence. But that does not remove from Austria's shoulders the onus of so governing herself that she may survive. My remark is in entire consonance with His Majesty's Government's policy all along . . . I certainly have no reason to think that the policy of His Majesty's Government is likely to undergo any modification in the sense of a declaration of disinterestedness. Indeed there is no question of that whatsoever.'

<sup>5</sup> In his letter of September 12 Sir W. Selby had written: 'according to Austrian lights, we have not been able to give them much effective help during the past year . . . On the commercial side . . . we have not been able to meet any of the Austrian suggestions . . . It may be a very unfair outlook after all we have most certainly done for them since the war, but the stress of the struggle of the past year has rendered memories very short.'

<sup>6</sup> A reference to the conversion of the 1923 Austrian Government Guaranteed Loan; for the relevant Resolution adopted by the Council of the League of Nations on September 25, 1934, see *L/N.O.J.*, November 1934, p. 1435.

<sup>7</sup> This record, received on September 14 as enclosure in Geneva despatch No. 114 L/N. of September 10, is not printed.

application has undergone any change. No doubt Austria would like any or all of the three Powers, Great Britain, France or Italy, to spare her the odium of arraigning a sister-German country before the League, by themselves coercing Germany into accepting a solution of the problem which would effectively preserve Austria's independence. Here, in my opinion, Austrian judgment is at fault, and you are already familiar with the arguments which, as I see it, would make such a step undesirable, ineffective, and, in the long run, damaging.<sup>8</sup> We have never placed any obstacle in the way of Austria laying her grievances before the League—or, to take a more recent and more striking example of Austrian pusillanimity and lack of initiative—attaching conditions to the grant of the Papen agrément.<sup>9</sup> On the contrary, although in February we did not feel able to prejudge the case on which as a member of the Council we might have been called at a later date to pass judgment, I cannot agree that it was for this reason that Dollfuss abandoned his idea of going to the League. The only real and effective reason was that the Italians disliked then, as they do today, the idea of a show-down at Geneva. It was they who headed Dollfuss off and won him over to the plan of strengthening his Government's position by suppressing the Socialists. Dollfuss himself knew quite well where he stood. If he had been certain that we would all—including Italy—have favoured an appeal to the League, I can see no reason why he should have felt that 'in no circumstances could he . . .<sup>10</sup> afford to appear at the Council table as the arraigner of Germany'.<sup>11</sup> Those may have been his feelings last summer. By February he had surely burnt his boats.

The penultimate paragraph of your letter, however, suggests to me that it is not I but you who are in favour of a change in policy towards Austria. 'The position', you write, ' . . .<sup>10</sup> cannot now be left where the declaration of February last<sup>12</sup> has left it.' Unfortunately we *cannot* change it. By the time this reaches you the discussions at Geneva may have made both your letter and my reply out-of-date. But they will have made it increasingly clear that we cannot take the initiative in proposing, much less in imposing, any special course of treatment for the Austrian question, even if we knew—which, alas, we do not—what form that treatment ought to take in order to be successful.

<sup>8</sup> In his letter of September 3, Sir R. Vansittart had written: 'In internal matters to *appear* to be interfering would be not only to defeat our own object but also to deny that independence which we wish to preserve and which Germany is striving to take away . . . it is surely true that unless the Austrian Government show the will and political nous to survive, our labours will be in vain. An "independent" country, and a German one at that, cannot afford to have an alien prompter always on the stage, and in the middle of the limelight as well.'

<sup>9</sup> Cf. No. 10 and No. 17, note 3.

<sup>10</sup> Punctuation as in the original letter.

<sup>11</sup> In his letter of September 12, Sir W. Selby had written: Dollfuss 'did not *dare* to challenge Germany without promise of full support in advance from the Powers who alone could deal effectively with Germany. In *no* circumstances could he, as a result of *his own initiative*, afford to appear at the Council table as the arraigner of Germany, although he would have been perfectly prepared to state his case if some other Great Power had taken on its shoulders the responsibility of putting Germany in the dock.'

<sup>12</sup> See No. 9, note 5.

I have seen in your letter to Sargent of Sept. 12th<sup>13</sup> the sort of treatment you have in view, but frankly do you think that, given the moods, tempers, and ambitions of the various parties concerned, there is any prospect of progress, let alone success, along the line you suggest in that letter? I confess I cannot bring myself to think that there is. It would be more likely to accentuate the differences in policy between the 3 defending Powers than to bring Germany to submit to a joint settlement dictated by them. Besides, if the unlikely did happen and agreement was reached between the 3 defending Powers we would then find ourselves manœuvred into the position of having to co-operate with them in bringing pressure to enforce our views. In fact, we would be assuming a fresh commitment, which is precisely what H.M. Government are determined not to do.

Of course the truth of the matter is that although *we* may be convinced that that maintenance of Austrian independence in present circumstances is a vital British interest, British public opinion, the House of Commons and, I might add, the Cabinet itself are by no means so convinced of this fact. It would be easier to convince them if we could point to a united Austria unanimously defending its independence against the attacks of Germany. But their suspicions are at once aroused when they think that the Foreign Office is supporting a minority Government against the wishes of the majority of the population, and it is very hard to persuade them that in supporting Herr von Schuschnigg we are really serving British interests and not merely pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for the benefit of the Austrian Heimwehr and the Italian Government.

In these circumstances any fresh commitment with Germany is suspect, and any more active policy—any ‘initiative’—on our part, if it is to produce any effect at all, must, I think you will agree, be in the nature of a commitment; for the days are over when Austria could be saved merely by financial and economic doles. Schuschnigg himself has made this quite clear by the proposals he has now put forward in Geneva,<sup>14</sup> which represent nothing more nor less than a military guarantee to maintain the present Austrian Government in power. As our participation in such a guarantee is, for reasons of internal policy if for no other, out of the question I am afraid I can see no alternative but to continue our policy, of which the declaration of February last was the outward and visible sign—namely close and continuous con-

<sup>13</sup> In this letter Sir W. Selby had expressed his view that the time had come for Great Britain, Italy, and France to make some attempt to get clearly in their minds along what lines they intended to give effect to the Declaration of February 17th, 1934, and to agree on their attitude towards the mission of Herr von Papen. He wrote: ‘The best chance for success is if we take the position that a solution *must* be found . . . Our approach to the problem must be on the basis that we must recognise Austria is a German country, whose political independence must however be respected in the interests of European peace. For the rest, any plan for the Danubian area must take account of Germany’s economic interests. Take up that position on the basis of some agreement among ourselves, and we can then find out exactly what Germany is after, and put her good faith in despatching Herr von Papen to a real test.’

<sup>14</sup> See Nos. 92 and 93.



sultation with France and Italy so as to maintain the united front; encouragement of the Austrian Government as occasion offers by word, and when possible by deed; and generally giving good advice whenever Austria, France and Italy seem on the point of committing some piece of unwisdom. It may be true, as you say, that this policy no longer responds to the requirements of the situation as it has developed in *Vienna*, especially so far as *our own position* is concerned. All I can say to that is that it still does respond, as nothing else can, to the situation as it has developed in *London*, especially so far as *the position of H.M. Government* is concerned. In a word, my dear Walford, however much I would personally like to make a whole cartload of bigger and better bricks for you, I have not got the straw here wherewith to do so.<sup>15</sup>

R. VANSITTART

<sup>15</sup> In his memoirs, *Diplomatic Twilight 1930-1940* (London, 1953), Sir Walford Selby does not refer to the above exchanges with Sir R. Vansittart, but he does print some broader criticisms of British foreign policy made by him in September 1934: see pp. 33-35, 143-55.

### No. 103

*Letter from Mr. Eden (Geneva) to Sir R. Vansittart*<sup>1</sup>

[C 6631/74/18]

GENEVA, *September 21, 1934*

My dear Van,

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter which I have sent to the Secretary of State as the outcome of a talk with Temperley.<sup>2</sup> We are both of us really very worried about this problem of the policing of the Saar. There is, in addition to the main issue which I have mentioned in my letter to the Secretary of State, the problem of Knox's personal safety. He really ought to have a good bodyguard of toughs, and he has not got it. I wonder if there is any way in which we can help as to this also?<sup>3</sup>

Yours ever  
ANTHONY

<sup>1</sup> No date of receipt or filing has been recorded in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>2</sup> Major-General A. C. Temperley had been the British military representative at the League of Nations since 1925.

<sup>3</sup> This proposal, which had already been made in the memorandum of September 5 (No. 77), led to the seconding of two officers of the Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D.) of Scotland Yard (The Metropolitan Police Force), Detective-Sergeant Morris and Detective-Sergeant Suttling, who left London on October 22 to act as a permanent bodyguard for Mr. Knox. In a letter to Mr. Knox of October 8 Mr. Sargent wrote: 'As it is considered here that it would be a delicate and a slow matter for you to bring this question [of remuneration] before the Commission or to propose to charge the costs to the Commission accounts, His Majesty's Government propose themselves to defray the expenditure incurred.'

*Copy*

GENEVA, September 21, 1934

My dear J.S.

Both General Temperley and I have seen Knox in the course of the last few days about the Saar. I will not weary you now about the points that are coming before the Council, but both of us are much perturbed about the problem of policing the Saar during the period of the elections. Knox tells us that he has raised some 300 local gendarmerie and he is still hoping to increase this force by recruitment from Luxemburg and Switzerland. Time, however, presses and I fear that this force is never likely to be of very much use. If we take the most optimistic view, we may perhaps hope that it will be able to cope with minor local riots. Certainly it will not be able to do more.

What then is to happen in the event of any kind of putsch, either from within or from without? For to cope with this would be quite beyond the powers of Knox's gendarmerie. Clearly the only effective action in such an event would be the intervention of French troops. In May, when this matter was before the Council, Knox told me that he had spoken to Barthou as to the availability of French troops in case of need and had received satisfactory assurances. In the last week, however, Knox has had a further conversation with M. Barthou, from which the position does not appear to be so satisfactory or so clear. The movement of troops, in case of need, requires the sanction of Marshal Pétain and M. Barthou.<sup>4</sup> Not more than two battalions appear to be available, and no machinery for setting even these two battalions in motion seems to have been prepared. The point which General Temperley stresses to me is that if these troops are to be of any avail in case of need, all plans up to the last detail for their use must have been laid beforehand. Otherwise the making of arrangements for their removal, collecting of lorries for their transport, calling in of outlying detachments, arrangement of supplies, and so forth, would take so long that two or three days might well elapse between Knox's appeal for French troops and their actual arrival on the scene. We know enough of German methods to be confident that, if they do attempt a putsch, two or three days will at least be a dangerous, and might be a fatal, interval. If the putsch were attempted, and Knox and the remainder of the Governing Commission fall into the hands of those carrying

<sup>4</sup> In the record of a conversation with Mr. Knox at Geneva on September 18 Mr. Strang wrote that Mr. Knox 'had been assured by M. Barthou last June that by a Cabinet decision the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and War were authorised on their own responsibility to give effect to any call that might come from the Governing Commission [cf. No. 75, para. 8] for French troops. He understands, however, from Colonel Heywood [H.M. Military Attaché at Paris] that the present military dispositions are not favourable to an early response to such an appeal. He, therefore, intends to ask M. Barthou to confirm his statement of last June.' In a letter to Mr. Baxter of September 23, Mr. Strang reported a further conversation with Mr. Knox, who now understood that the President of the Council would also be involved in such a decision.

out the putsch, no-one could tell what their fate might be if they had to wait some days for rescue.

The upshot of all this is: can we do anything to give the French an indication that we think their plans should be fully laid, without any further delay, for the intervention of French troops, as arranged at a Council meeting in 1926,<sup>5</sup> should Knox call for it? I hardly like to approach M. Barthou officially as to this. Do you think that it would be possible for Clerk in Paris to have a confidential word with Léger? After all, Knox is one of our own people, and it is only natural that we should feel this anxiety for his safety. A hint from us that we are not quite happy about the readiness of French preparations should the need arise, might prove salutary.

There is this further consideration in this connexion—the knowledge on the part of the Germans that Knox can call in French troops, is the one really effective sanction he has at his disposal. Rosting, the previous High Commissioner in Danzig, and Lester<sup>6</sup> have both told me that in Danzig the one really powerful weapon they had was the knowledge of the Danzigers that if matters went too far the High Commissioner had the right to call in Polish troops. Is it not likely that if the Germans get to learn, as no doubt they will, that the plans of the French General Staff have been well laid and the French troops are available in case of need at short notice, this in itself would give the Germans serious cause for thought were they contemplating a putsch?

I am sending a copy of this letter to Van, for I am not sure of the date of your return from Balmoral.

No other news here. We have had a strenuous day over minorities, and I hope have taken the right line over the universalisation issue.<sup>7</sup>

Yours ever

ANTHONY

<sup>5</sup> On March 18, 1926; cf. *L/N.O.J.*, April 1926, pp. 527–8.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Seán Lester was the League of Nations High Commissioner in the Free City of Danzig, 1934–7.

<sup>7</sup> See *L/N.O.J.*, *S.S. No. 130*, pp. 58–60.

## No. 104

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 23, 10 a.m.)*

*No. 78 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5204/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 23, 1934, 1.34 a.m.

Following for Sir R. Vansittart from Mr. Eden.

Your telegram No. 81.<sup>1</sup>

Monsieur Massigli and Baron Aloisi in turn enquired further this morning<sup>2</sup> as to our attitude to proposed Austrian pact. I told each of them that I had not received any further instructions nor did I anticipate any in the near future since Secretary of State was in Scotland and there was no Cabinet

<sup>1</sup> No. 101.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram was drafted on Saturday, September 22.

meeting until next week. Speaking personally however, it seemed to me clear that the first step was for France and Italy to be in agreement as to the project they wished to pursue. Moreover, if pact was to be of any avail an attempt must be made during negotiations to include all Austria's neighbours except Switzerland. As to our attitude if agreement were reached among Austria's neighbours we should be prepared to consider as favourably as possible making of some declaration with regard to his proposal. I thought we should prefer that whenever arrangement was eventually come to (? it)<sup>3</sup> should be within the framework of the League.

Monsieur Massigli expressed himself as fully in accord with what I had said. Baron Aloisi however took strong exception to associating the League with the pact and he argued that this would make Germany's participation impossible. As to negotiation with Austria's neighbours Baron Aloisi maintained that this was technically impossible and would destroy all hope of an agreement. Surely it was sufficient for the promise of Italy to negotiate agreement,<sup>4</sup> sign it and open it for signature by others. I pointed out to him the difference between previous Franco-Italian understanding followed by negotiation with Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Germany based upon such understanding and presentation to them for signature of an agreement already arrived at without their participation. Baron Aloisi undertook to think this over.

At a further interview for which Baron Aloisi asked this evening he again emphasised the immense practical difficulty of a negotiation involving more countries than France, Austria and Italy. He was profoundly sceptical of such extended negotiation reaching any conclusion. Matter was urgent, so urgent that Italian Government was determined to get a solution one way or another before we all left Geneva next Thursday.<sup>5</sup> Monsieur Barthou and Monsieur Berger Waldenegg would be back in Geneva on Monday and with their proxy<sup>6</sup> and that of Monsieur Benes progress should be possible. Italy was asking for collaboration of Western Europe in Austrian problem. If she did not get it she would make an agreement with Austria on her own account. Situation in Austria was precarious and events might easily occur which would force Italy to mobilize troops on the frontier again<sup>7</sup> which she was most reluctant to do.

Baron Aloisi was anxious to discover what would be our attitude to a pact between Austria, France and Italy which did not include Austria's other neighbours and argued that if French were to prove content with such an arrangement surely we could approve it. I expressed no opinion as to this to Baron Aloisi but I should be glad of your views.

Repeated to Vienna and Rome Saving.

<sup>3</sup> The text was here uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> The text here should probably have read: 'sufficient for Italy to promise to negotiate agreement'.

<sup>5</sup> September 27.

<sup>6</sup> This word read 'help' on another copy of this telegram.

<sup>7</sup> For Italian troop movements on the Austrian frontier in July 1934 after the murder of Dr. Dollfuss, see Volume VI, No. 538.

**No. 105**

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 24, 8 p.m.)*

*No. 81 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5219/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 24, 1934, 7.5 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

Following is my appreciation of Austrian question as seen from here:

(1) Proposal to bring any agreement within the framework of the League is strongly opposed by Italians and seems unlikely to be insisted on by M. Barthou.

(2) If we are asked to reiterate declaration of February 17th, it will be very difficult for us to refuse. On the other hand we are already exposed to some criticism on the ground that, having declared our interest in Austrian independence, we are unwilling to take any concrete action to defend it. Repetition of declaration, combined with refusal to undertake any commitment to give effect to it, will give further ground for such criticism both now and in the future.

(3) The Italian haste to produce some agreement here may be due to desire (a) to implement promises given to the Austrian Chancellor at Florence<sup>1</sup> or (b) to drive a wedge between France and Yugoslavia prior to the King's visit to Paris.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand the situation in Austria is, so far as we can judge, not so urgent as to justify hurried and perhaps ill-considered action here, and there seems much to be said for delay until Franco-Italian relations become clearer.

Repeated to Rome, Vienna and Paris Saving.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 97, note 2.

**No. 106**

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 24, 10.40 p.m.)*

*No. 80 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5218/37/3]*

*Immediate*

GENEVA, September 24, 1934, 8.30 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

M. Barthou and Baron Aloisi asked me to meet them this morning in order that they might give me some account of the progress of their conversations on the subject of Austria.

M. Barthou said that he fully understood His Majesty's Government's position as frequently stated by you and myself that there could be no question of any new engagement by Great Britain in respect of Austria. It had, however, occurred to him as a good starting point in any negotiations for any further pact that the Powers who had participated in the declaration of February 17th should make it clear that they still stood by its terms and should invite all Austria's neighbours to associate themselves with it.

Baron Aloisi agreed to this suggestion though he made it clear that so far as he was concerned it did not go far enough. He hoped that France, Italy and Austria at least would be able to take some further step.

A discussion then took place between M. Barthou and Baron Aloisi in which I took no part as to what form this further step was to take and how it was to be negotiated. Baron Aloisi sought throughout to induce M. Barthou to agree to a negotiation between France, Austria and Italy for a pact to be signed by them and presented to Germany and Little Entente. M. Barthou, though clearly anxious to go to the utmost lengths to meet Baron Aloisi, did, however, maintain that he could sign no pact with terms of which Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia had not previously signified their agreement. Nor could he sign pact terms of which His Majesty's Government did not approve even though His Majesty's Government were not a party to it. Baron Aloisi tried to argue that it would be as difficult for Italy to sign without previously being assured of German agreement as for France to sign without being previously assured of Little Entente agreement. M. Barthou repudiated this suggestion and eventually it was agreed that representatives of France, Italy and Austria should meet together and seek to evolve terms of some project. I was invited to send a representative to these discussions but declined to do so.

Both parties have undertaken to keep us informed of progress of negotiations. Baron Aloisi suggested that if agreement were reached His Majesty's Government might be willing to pronounce some benediction on terms of that agreement. I maintained, however, that this was premature and that our attitude would in any event depend upon terms of proposal to be agreed upon. M. Barthou said that he fully understood this.

Earlier in the conversation I mentioned that His Majesty's Government would probably prefer that any arrangement that were come to should be within the framework of the League. Baron Aloisi again declared that this was impossible and M. Barthou suggested that the point might be left for later consideration after it was seen whether or not formula for a pact could be agreed upon.

Repeated to Rome, Vienna and Paris Saving.

### No. 107

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 24, 9.50 p.m.)*

*No. 82 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5220/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 24, 1934, 8.30 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

*Strictly confidential*

My own impression of this morning's conversation was that Monsieur Barthou's present pre-occupation was to make a success of his visit to Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 105: the reference however appears to be to Geneva telegram No. 80 L.N., i.e. No. 106.

To achieve this he is perhaps prepared to take risks in respect of Little Entente which in the [*sic*]<sup>2</sup> circumstances French Minister for Foreign Affairs might be less willing to do. Baron Aloisi is fully aware of this and is taking full advantage of it. For instance when Monsieur Barthou suggested that one of the conditions of his visit to Rome was that the (? policy)<sup>3</sup> of that visit should be improved relations between Italy, Yugoslavia and France, Baron Aloisi immediately repudiated the suggestion that there were any conditions attached to the visit at all. Monsieur Barthou somewhat reluctantly agreed that this was so and was content to express his own hope as to result of visit.

The truth would appear to be that Monsieur Barthou is in a difficult situation. From what he told me in a private conversation later today he is acutely conscious of this but Baron Aloisi, whom he again described<sup>4</sup> as 'un homme terrible' and as one who alternatively pleads and storms with him, is tireless in his pressure upon Monsieur Barthou to follow the Italian lead in Central Europe.

Repeated to Rome, Vienna and Paris Saving.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly in error for 'other'.

<sup>3</sup> The text is here uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 97.

## No. 108

*Memorandum by Sir J. Simon<sup>1</sup>*

[R 5265/37/3]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 24, 1934*

*Austria*

...<sup>2</sup>

4. We may take it as definite that His Majesty's Government would not join in any pact of guarantee. Before we could make any statement of approval on such a pact entered into by others we should have to see its terms. It would, for example, be important to be sure that the pact by the admission of Yugoslavia did not increase rather than diminish the prospects of conflict. Again, we must not by giving approval in effect agree in advance that French action against Germany would not amount to aggression and would thus bring into play the obligations of Locarno.

5. The question remains whether there is anything which we should propose of a purely consultative kind in the event of Austria being assailed from without. The argument for this is that if we reply to Italy with a blank negative and advertise our unwillingness or inability to do anything at all, we may lose all influence with Italy and bring about a situation in which Mussolini will come to the conclusion that Austria cannot maintain herself

<sup>1</sup> According to a note of September 25 by Mr. Seymour, the Secretary of State 'made his own note for use at today's Cabinet'; cf. No. 113 below.

<sup>2</sup> The first three paragraphs of this paper summarized the contents of Nos. 87, 96, and 101.

and that he had better agree with Germany to a division of the spoils. Alternatively, in the absence of any sort of understanding for consultation with Italy, Italy may send troops into Austria and at once become embroiled with Yugoslavia, and Baron Aloisi (see Geneva telegram No. 78<sup>3</sup> of September 22nd) has indicated plainly his view of the alternatives. He said to Mr. Eden 'Italy was asking for collaboration of Western Europe in Austrian problem. If she did not get it she would make an agreement with Austria on her own account. The situation in Austria was precarious and events might easily occur which would force Italy to mobilise troops on the frontier again, which she was most reluctant to do.'

6. Once Yugoslav troops are involved inside the Austrian boundary, with Italian troops also advancing and Austria in a state of chaos, a conflagration will have begun the limits of which no man can see. Germany and France may be involved and we come within measurable distance of a claim upon us under Locarno. We are bound, therefore, to consider very carefully the possibility of a precautionary measure the main object of which would be to secure that Signor Mussolini does not act on his own account by mobilising and bringing Italian aid to Austria or by deserting his friends in England and France and patching things up with his former friends in Germany. Since joining in a guarantee is quite impossible, the only way to do this would seem to be for us to indicate our willingness to consult with France and Italy in case of need about Austria. We have already refused to join in any sort of guarantee<sup>4</sup> and this may help to show that consultation is consultation and nothing more. But Italy would give a good deal for a British signature to anything (cf. her eagerness in February when she changed the formula at our request)<sup>5</sup> and by this means we might have a good chance of preventing Mussolini's isolated and spasmodic action and play the part of a mediator who does not accept any new commitments.

7. There is undoubtedly a good deal to be said from the point of view of foreign policy for proposing such a course. On the other hand any overt action of ours which seems to imply further responsibility in Continental affairs will have a very mixed reception in this country. The sort of agreement which might perhaps be suggested is as follows:—

'The signatories (France, Italy and the United Kingdom), in view of their joint declaration of February 17th, 1934, agree that, if occasion should arise, they will consult together in support of their common view expressed in the said joint declaration that the political independence and integrity of Austria should be maintained in accordance with the relevant treaties.

'The above agreement is without prejudice to the functions and duties laid upon the Council of the League of Nations by the Covenant.'

8. This would not, of course, preclude Powers on the Continent entering into a pact of guarantee if they are prepared to do so.

J. S.

<sup>3</sup> No. 104.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 87.

<sup>5</sup> See Volume VI, Nos. 283-4, 288, and 290.



*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 25, 9.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 86 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5279/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 25, 1934, 7.57 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

Monsieur Massigli called on me this morning and left text of a new draft declaration which he had submitted to Italian delegation last night. Translation of this text is given in my immediately following telegram.<sup>1</sup>

He said Italians had peremptorily refused to agree to this text. Their reasons were firstly that any reference (? whatever)<sup>2</sup> to League of Nations was inadmissible and secondly that penultimate paragraph was not nearly strong enough. On both these points Monsieur Barthou had decided to stand firm and no agreement between France and Italy on a text of this character was therefore possible. Monsieur Massigli said that he was seriously alarmed by situation. What Italians seemed to be aiming at was a mandate for armed intervention in Austria. This in his view could only mean war. He was deeply suspicious of ulterior motives of Italians in this affair. If no joint agreement were reached very soon Italians intended to make a separate arrangement with Austria. He had already warned Austrians against the folly of this course. It would help if we could speak to Austrians in the same sense. This was the first suggestion he had to make.

In second place he thought it essential that something should be done about Austria at once, even though, as was now almost certain, conclusion of a pact should be found to be impossible.

I said that our information was that situation in Austria had somewhat quietened down and I doubted whether need for action was quite so urgent as this. Would not prospect of agreement be improved by King Alexander's visit to Paris and Monsieur Barthou's visit to Rome?

Monsieur Massigli agreed that internal Austrian situation was better. But there was a general expectation that something would be . . .<sup>2</sup> at Geneva and it might be undesirable to disappoint that expectation. Further reason was incalculability of Italian policy and certainty of Yugoslav reaction at an ill-judged Italian step. What he had in mind therefore was that declaration of February 17th should now be re-affirmed in rather more specific terms. Terms of renewed declaration might be drafted somewhat on the lines of 3 paragraphs of draft he had brought me beginning with words 'considering that' and ending with words 'peace in Europe'. This would serve to reassure Austria and at the same time ease the position as between Italy and Yugoslavia. But he was not at all sure that even after renewing declaration Italians would not try separate arrangement with Austria.

I said that I would submit this suggestion to you though I could not conceal difficulties which I saw in his proposal. I might well be asked why we should choose at this moment to reaffirm declaration in more explicit terms

<sup>1</sup> No. 110.

<sup>2</sup> The text is here uncertain.

if at the same time we continue to refuse to undertake any commitment to give effect to it. The best excuse that I could find for reaffirming declaration would be if its purpose were to create opportunity for inviting Austria's other neighbours to associate themselves with it.

Monsieur Massigli said that if declaration could be made general it would be all to the good. Italians, he thought, could have no objection to that. Monsieur Benes whom I have seen since is doubtful of the value of reaffirming declaration of February 17th. I can hardly think that Little Entente would be flattered by invitation coming more than six months late.

I am myself doubtful of the value of stating a second time what has already been said and if text were to be varied at all political interpretations would be placed upon every variation.

Repeated to Vienna, Rome and Paris Saving.

### No. 110

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 26, 9.30 a.m.)  
No. 87 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5280/37/3]*

GENEVA, September 25, 1934, 11.35 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

Following is translation referred to in my immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

'Please (sic)<sup>2</sup> (? the)<sup>2</sup> undersigned acting on behalf of their Governments in view of Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain<sup>3</sup> considering that declaration of February 17th, 1934, signed on behalf of the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and Italy affirm necessity for maintaining in conformity with treaties in force independence and integrity of Austria.

Recognising that the present circumstances render solemn re-affirmation of this declaration more particularly desirable.

Declare that any disturbance coming from without and endangering political independence or territorial integrity and sovereignty of Austria would be contrary to maintenance of peace in Europe.

In consequence Governments of . . .<sup>4</sup> undertake to concert together without delay with a view to conclusion of all arrangements requisite for ensuring if necessary observation of this principle.

Present declaration shall be communicated to the Council of the League of Nations.'

Repeated to Vienna, Rome and Paris Saving.

<sup>1</sup> No. 109.

<sup>2</sup> Printed as in the original telegram. According to the French text (copy received in the Foreign Office on September 28 as enclosure in Geneva despatch No. 141 of September 25) the draft declaration began: 'Les soussignés agissant au nom de leurs Gouvernements.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 6, note 5. Article 88 declared the independence of Austria to be inalienable except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations.

<sup>4</sup> Punctuation as in the original telegram.

*Mr. Charles<sup>1</sup> (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 28)*

*No. 469 [C 6492/247/18]*

MOSCOW, September 25, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that notes were exchanged in Moscow on the 10th September between M. Sokolnicki, the Polish Chargé d'Affaires, and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs guaranteeing the validity of existing agreements between the two Governments, such as the Pact of Non-Aggression.<sup>2</sup>

2. M. Sokolnicki has informed me that his Government were determined to renew these guarantees before deciding on their attitude towards the question of the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the League of Nations, and that Poland had purposely not raised at Geneva the question of a permanent seat on the Council of the League in order to avoid, at the present moment, more trouble than could be helped.<sup>3</sup>

3. In referring to the proposed Eastern Pact, M. Sokolnicki said that the Polish Government would probably prefer to rely on the existing ten-year non-aggression pacts with Germany and the U.S.S.R. to becoming parties to a general agreement under which the necessity might arise for German or Russian troops to enter Poland. Although, he thought, any agreement might be broken on the principle that if you really wished to beat a dog it was easy to find a stick, at least in the bi-lateral agreements there was no question of foreign troops crossing Polish territory. Poland's position was indeed a precarious one since that country was likely to become a battlefield if war broke out and a multiple pact would only make the situation more dangerous. It had been a matter of painful surprise to the Poles that they had not been consulted by the originators of the latest proposal on a question which so vitally concerned them.<sup>4</sup> He thought that the true situation of his country was more clearly understood in England than in 'other' countries.<sup>5</sup> I said

<sup>1</sup> Acting Counsellor in H.M. Embassy at Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> The Soviet-Polish Non-Aggression Pact had been signed at Moscow on July 25, 1932; see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 135, pp. 711-13. By a Protocol of May 5, 1934, its duration had been extended to December 31, 1945; see *ibid.*, p. 711, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Poland was among the Council members (including also the United Kingdom) who voted, on September 15, in support of the offer of a permanent seat to the Soviet Union, while Panama, the Argentine Republic, and Portugal abstained; see *L.N.O.J.*, November 1934, p. 1395. Cf. No. 88, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> A reference presumably to the German memorandum of September 8; cf. No. 85.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Eden's report of his conversation with M. Beck at Geneva on September 8 during which the latter had explained Poland's attitude towards the proposed Eastern Pact is printed in Volume VII, No. 627. With reference to M. Beck's statement reported therein that the Polish Government had deliberately pursued in recent years 'une politique d'équilibre', Mr. Sargent remarked in a minute of September 11 that the Poles would find 'a "politique d'équilibre"' a more difficult gymnastic feat than they think . . . Gt. Britain who has more than any other European State the qualifications necessary for the practice of this

that the Soviet Government might possibly become suspicious about Poland's intentions if she did not support the pact and might even be encouraged to believe more firmly in the possibility of an agreement between Poland, Germany and Japan. M. Sokolnicki said that he was sure that this rumour had been fabricated either in Japan, Soviet Russia, or Germany. He treated it as an absurd invention and then expressed the opinion that Great Britain was not much in favour of an Eastern pact which was really a cloak for the conclusion of a Franco-Russian alliance.

4. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Representative at Warsaw.

I have, &c.,  
NOEL CHARLES

difficult policy, has found it necessary to abandon it of recent years and where Gt. Britain has failed it is not likely that Poland will succeed.' Sir R. Vansittart added: 'Very true. R.V. Sept. 11.'

## No. 112

*Sir N. Henderson<sup>1</sup> (Belgrade) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 4)*  
*No. 157 [R 5427/37/3]*

*Confidential*

BELGRADE, September 25, 1934

Sir,

I took the opportunity of an audience with the King on my return to Yugoslavia to raise the question of the Austrian refugees in this country, and of the stories published in the *Reichspost* of Vienna<sup>2</sup> in regard to Yugoslav connivance in a fresh Nazi *coup* in that country.

2. I fortunately began by expressing my absolute confidence in the good faith of the Yugoslav Government. I had got no further than that when the King launched out into a tirade against the French Government and the French Minister here for having in connexion with these refugees indicated that they suspected him of an actual intrigue with Germany behind their back. His Majesty, who was in an excitable frame of mind due largely to bad health, told me that he contemplated his forthcoming visit to Paris with even greater distaste than that to Sofia.<sup>3</sup>

3. Now, if there is one quality which His Majesty possesses in a supreme degree, it is that of loyalty to his friends and his word. He is equally an out and out enemy which incidentally greatly increases the difficulty of improving Italo-Yugoslav relations. But of his loyalty I have no doubt whatsoever and I was quite sincere when I told His Majesty that I thought that the French, if they really so suspected him, were, in spite of all their well-known intelligence, showing the utmost stupidity. I added that what, in my opinion, had

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Minister at Belgrade.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 86.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 97, note 2. King Alexander and Queen Marie paid a State visit to Sofia on September 27.

given colour to these stories of intrigues was the attitude of the Yugoslav Consul at Klagenfurt.<sup>4</sup> I had heard from a quite independent source that he had been excessively indiscreet, and that his pan-Yugoslav propaganda in Carinthia had, in my opinion, been quite enough to give rise to these stories of a Nazi-Yugoslav understanding. The King was inclined to take little account of my remarks concerning M. Novocan whom he described as stupid but well-meaning. I propose, however, to revert to the question when I see the Minister for Foreign Affairs who returned yesterday from Geneva. For, in truth, I believe M. Novocan to be the smoke which gave rise to the suspicion of a fire.

4. But, on the general aspect of this question I have no hesitation in expressing a categorical opinion. Whether it was wise or unwise, possible or impossible to prevent these refugees from ever entering Yugoslavia is open to argument. The circumstances were admittedly difficult. The outbreak was very sudden and the fighting took place on the frontier itself. I doubt myself whether, on the ground of humanity, the Yugoslav Government can be greatly blamed for permitting these refugees to enter their territory. They are now interned in the neighbourhood of Varazdin which is at least 50 kilometres from the Austrian frontier. They were established where they are because there happened to be at Varazdin suitable empty barracks for their accommodation. The attitude of the Yugoslav Government, now that they are there, is and will continue to be correct in regard to them. Admittedly there are Nazi sympathisers in this country, particularly in the Narodna Odbrana, who may succeed in perpetrating irregularities on their behalf but whatever they do will be on such a small scale as to be without importance.

5. In order to make clear the Yugoslav attitude towards Austria, I must refer to my despatch No. 138<sup>5</sup> of the 30th July last. What Yugoslavia most desires is a completely independent Austria. She is apprehensive of the 'Anschluss' and would prevent it if she could; but she is prepared, however unwillingly, to submit to it if it becomes inevitable. She will certainly do nothing to encourage it. If Austria must be dependent on some other Power she would infinitely prefer that Power to be Germany rather than Italy. She feels, in fact, so strongly about the latter that she might go to war rather than submit to an Austrian dependence on Italy which she considers tantamount to the abandonment by herself of her own right to security. Though there are jingoes and extremists here, as in every country, she has no desire and will have no desire, until, at least, she has consolidated and assimilated what already constitutes Yugoslavia, to acquire Carinthia or any fresh territory anywhere. If her troops ever crossed the frontier, it would be with the utmost reluctance and with the sole object of forestalling Italy.

6. The attitude of Yugoslavia towards Germany is governed by her attitude towards Italy. The more she fears Italy, the more she is inclined to gravitate towards Germany. She regards the latter country as a form of

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Anton Novocan.

<sup>5</sup> Received in the Foreign Office on August 7, not printed.

reinsurance against Italy. So far all the advances have been from the side of Germany, and Yugoslavia would have been foolish to repulse them since economically they have been advantageous to her.<sup>6</sup> But from accepting advances to getting actually engaged is a far step. There will be no engagement in any foreseeable future unless Italy drives her into one—just as there will be no helping the Nazis to conquer Vienna unless the only alternative is Italian Fascism.

7. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Minister at Vienna.

I have, &c.,

NEVILLE HENDERSON

<sup>6</sup> A German-Yugoslav Commercial Treaty had been concluded on May 1, 1934 (cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 23) and supplemented by a tourist agreement which gave facilities for tourists to travel to Yugoslavia.

### No. 113

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*

*No. 88 L.N. Telegraphic: by telephone [R 5279/37/3]<sup>1</sup>*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 26, 1934, 1.40 p.m.*

[Following for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart.]

Decision in my immediately following tel.<sup>2</sup> was taken by Cabinet yesterday in the light of your tels. ending with No. 82,<sup>3</sup> but before receipt of your tels. Nos. 86<sup>4</sup> & 87.<sup>5</sup> S[ecretary] of S[tate] is being consulted at St Andrews<sup>6</sup> as to how this decision is affected by your two later telegrams.

<sup>1</sup> Only the approved drafts of this telegram and of Nos. 114–17 below are preserved in the Foreign Office archives.

<sup>2</sup> No. 114.

<sup>3</sup> See Nos. 104–7. Geneva telegram No. 79 L.N. for Sir R. Vansittart has not been traced in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>4</sup> No. 109.

<sup>5</sup> No. 110.

<sup>6</sup> Sir J. Simon appears to have returned to Scotland immediately after attending the Cabinet meeting on September 25.

### No. 114

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*

*No. 89 L.N. Telegraphic: by telephone [R 5279/37/3]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 26, 1934, 2.25 p.m.*

[Following for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart.]

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

(a) To approve the line taken at Geneva by S[ecretary] of S[tate] for F[oreign] A[ffairs] and the Lord Privy Seal in refusing to enter into any new engagement in respect of Austria.

<sup>1</sup> No. 113.

(b) To approve generally the line of policy recommended by the S of S for F.A. as under:

(1) We stand by our declaration of Feb. 17th.

(2) We confirm that there can be no new engagement or commitment by Great Britain in respect of Austria.

(3) If discussions continue between France and Italy as to a new pact of guarantee to secure the independence of Austria we should on the above grounds, and to avoid misunderstanding, take no part in the discussions. We could, however, indicate at the proper time that the joint declaration of February to which we are parties and by which we stand naturally implies and actually contemplates that the parties to the declaration should keep in touch on the Austrian situation and should not take action without consulting one another.

(4) Drummond will be shortly returning to Rome and Barthou intends to pay a visit there in the middle of next month. It is desirable to relegate further discussion on the subject of Austria so far as we are concerned to the time of that visit and not to come out now with a new declaration which is likely to be regarded in some quarters as insufficient and in other quarters as implying though not expressing some sort of new commitment.

#### No. 115

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*

*No. 90 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5279/37/3]*

*Most Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 26, 1934, 5.45 p.m.*

Following for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart.

Your telegrams No. 86<sup>1</sup> and 87<sup>2</sup> and my telegram No. 89.<sup>3</sup>

In view of Cabinet decision of yesterday Secretary of State does not consider it possible for you to agree upon any new form of declaration whatever at Geneva, nor does he think that a public re-statement in terms of the declaration of February 17th should be made. You should therefore take the line that it goes without saying that the declaration of February 17th still represents the policy of H.M. Government and you could put forward explanation as in (b) (3) of my telegram under reference from words 'Joint declaration' to 'another'. Any proposal to transform the declaration into a written agreement, particularly with any modifications or additions, would require most careful consideration, and the Secretary of State considers it highly improbable that any such proposal would be accepted by H.M.G. You should therefore not express any opinion thereon.

Secretary of State, although unable to judge personally whether situation is now such that there is any cause for such precipitate action at Geneva as seems to be proposed, would have no objection to your saying that this does

<sup>1</sup> No. 109.

<sup>2</sup> No. 110.

<sup>3</sup> No. 114.

not appear to be the case. He is against offering advice to the Austrian Govt. on the proposal for a bi-lateral agreement with Italy and prefers that H.M. Amb[assador] in Rome should in conversation with Signor Mussolini refer to rumours which have reached us in this sense and deprecate, for reasons which are obvious, any such isolated action on the part of Italy.

Repeated to Rome and Paris.

## No. 116

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*

*No. 91 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5297/37/3]*

*Most Secret*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 26, 1934, 5.45 p.m.*

[Following for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart.]

We have excellent reason to suppose that instructions sent by Italian Govt. to their Geneva Delegation on Sept. 13th indicated that

(1) general strategic plan was settled between Signor Mussolini and Austrian Chancellor at Florence,<sup>1</sup> whereby appearance of spontaneity was to be given to Austrian approach to other powers while Italy sheltered behind her and pulled the strings

(2) common aim was to find a 'simple formula' which would afford the 'necessary elasticity' to Italian action in defence of Austria. Usual provision that the signatories would consult together to decide upon common action in case of need was to be avoided and initiative was to be left to the individual parties.

This would appear to confirm M. Massigli's impression recorded in your tel. No. 86<sup>2</sup> that Italians are aiming at a mandate for armed intervention in Austria. Please destroy.

Repeated to Rome and Paris.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 42.

<sup>2</sup> No. 109.

## No. 117

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 303 Telegraphic [R 5279/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 26, 1934, 7.20 p.m.*

My tel. to Geneva No. 90.<sup>1</sup>

You should seek an early opportunity of speaking to Signor Mussolini in the sense foreshadowed in my tel. under ref[erence].

Repeated to Geneva, Vienna, and Paris.

<sup>1</sup> No. 115.



**No. 118**

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*

*No. 93 L.N. Telegraphic [R 5279/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 26, 1934, 8.15 p.m.*

Following for Mr. Eden from Sir R. Vansittart.

I take it from your telegrams Nos. 86<sup>1</sup> and 87<sup>2</sup> that the Italian guarantee pact<sup>3</sup> is now dead owing to M. Barthou's refusal to sign it. If however it is revived I would suggest that you should make it clear, if you have not already done so, that His Majesty's Government, far from blessing, would doubt the wisdom of such a guarantee pact, even from the Italian point of view, unless (a) it were open to all Austria's neighbours (except Switzerland) as original members, i.e. they should all take part in its negotiation; (b) it were to contain a definite provision that any action by the signatories shall be in accordance with the procedure of the League Covenant.

<sup>1</sup> No. 109.

<sup>2</sup> No. 110.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 96.

**No. 119**

*Minute by Mr. Sargent*

*[R 5280/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 26, 1934*

Mr. Carr has telephoned from Geneva<sup>1</sup> with reference to Geneva telegrams Nos. 86<sup>2</sup> and 87<sup>3</sup> to ask for immediate instructions as, owing to our continued silence, their position is becoming extremely embarrassing.

He explained that the original Italian draft guarantee pact which we have hitherto been considering may now be considered as completely out of the picture as M. Barthou finally plucked up courage and refused to accept it. The proposal now under consideration is a reaffirmation of the Declaration of Feb. 17th with the elaborations indicated in Geneva tel. No. 87.

As the Italians refuse to accept the final paragraph of this draft, i.e. about the League of Nations, and as it is to be assumed that we would refuse to accept the penultimate paragraph as constituting a further commitment, the French are prepared to drop both paragraphs. In that case the proposed text would only contain one elaboration of our Declaration of February 17th, namely a paragraph declaring that 'any disturbance coming from without and endangering the political independence of territorial integrity and sovereignty of Austria would be contrary to the maintenance of peace in Europe'.

<sup>1</sup> The time of this telephone call is not recorded.

<sup>2</sup> No. 109.

<sup>3</sup> No. 110.

What the Delegation want to know now is whether they are to express no opinion on the present proposal; or whether they are authorised to accept the draft declaration in telegram No. 87 minus the last two paragraphs.

O. G. SARGENT

No. 120

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 28)*

*No. 1160 [C 6489/29/18]*

BERLIN, September 26, 1934

Sir,

In my despatch No. 794<sup>1</sup> I had the honour to give you an account of the so-called plot of June 30th. It was an event which was typical of the condition of Germany. On June 29th the well-conducted tourist was asserting that complete order reigned in Germany and that the whole nation stood as one man behind the Führer. Yet a situation then existed which, so Herr Hitler claims, justified the summary execution on the next day of some eighty persons, if the official figures are to be accepted, that is to say six times as many as were executed in Austria after the murder of the Chancellor.<sup>2</sup>

2. The storm broke. It passed and once more the tourist tells us that complete order reigns in Germany. I do not say that we are necessarily on the eve of further sanguinary proscriptions, but there are underground currents and cross currents which are clearly perceptible to experienced observers.

3. In the economic and political fields the Government continues to be beset with difficulties. The export trade is languishing largely, it is popularly believed, because the policy of the Hitler régime has led foreign countries to boycott German wares. The foreign currency crisis is becoming more acute every day. A wine merchant, who for the purpose of his business in England kept a bank balance of £30 in London, has been recently ordered to close his account. At the Music Hall the joke is made that the word 'devisen' (foreign exchange) has disappeared from the German vocabulary. The Mitropa Travel Bureau has announced that it can no longer issue railway tickets beyond the German frontier. Manufacturers are faced with the imminent exhaustion of their stocks of raw materials. In the textile industry certain factories are already working only three days a week. In Leipzig, Chemnitz and Dessau, where His Majesty's Consul at Leipzig<sup>3</sup> has just concluded a tour, there is widespread dissatisfaction amongst all classes. Herr Thyssen<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Volume VI, Appendix II, No. (iii).

<sup>2</sup> On July 25, 1934; see *ibid.*, Nos. 525-6, 536, and Appendix IV.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. H. B. Livingston.

<sup>4</sup> A German industrialist and chairman of the board of directors of the United Steel Works (Vereinigte Stahlwerke).

has quarrelled with Herr Hitler and, like Herr von Papen and Herr Regendanz,<sup>5</sup> rues the day when he put his hand in his pocket to help to finance the Hitler movement against Dr. Brüning.<sup>6</sup> The industrialists foresee that soon they will be unable to continue under existing conditions and their concerns may therefore be forcibly taken over by the State. This is a development, they allege, to which Dr. Goebbels and his associates are looking forward with satisfaction, if they are not actually working to hasten it. There is universal apprehension as to the possibility of a shortage of necessities in the coming winter. Those who can afford it are already laying in stocks, whilst the rest are looking forward ruefully to a war-time régime of potato bread, paper clothes and grass cigarettes. From abroad there is little hope of salvation, in view of the hostility of foreign public opinion. Even at home little effort is made to disguise the general lack of confidence in the mark. Savings are either being deliberately spent on luxuries or invested in real estate. A merchant in the motor trade told a member of my staff that the large increase in the sale of motor cars this summer was not due to anything but lack of confidence in the mark. Meanwhile prices of staple articles and the cost of living have been steadily rising and are likely to rise still further. On the Stock Exchange there has been a marked improvement in the price of shares while that of bonds has remained stationary.

4. This somewhat gloomy picture is very different from that painted by the tourist on his return from a trip to Germany. He sees smiling townships, well dressed inhabitants, no sign of poverty or unemployment, hotels and beer gardens filled to capacity, money being spent as freely as at a Blackpool wake. If he happens to know agriculturalists, he will find them relatively satisfied. Members of this Embassy who have toured Germany recently and who might perhaps be expected to see beneath the surface more clearly than casual tourists, have seen no signs of economic distress. Why is the economic aspect of Germany so different when viewed from the Wilhelmstrasse or from a motor car? It is difficult to say. To the tourist Germany looks as prosperous as England, but not even the Nazis contend that this is so. A partial explanation may be found in the fact that tourists usually visit the holiday centres in Bavaria and the Rhineland. This year Germans were obliged by the Austrian restrictions<sup>7</sup> and the devisa shortage<sup>8</sup> to remain at home. Consequently these districts were crowded with German holidaymakers, who came prepared to spend money freely. According to the election figures 320,000 German tourists voted in Upper Bavaria alone on August 19th.<sup>9</sup> In addition

<sup>5</sup> The banker Wilhelm Regendanz's relations with the Nazi party in 1932 are briefly referred to in E. Matthias and R. Morsey, *Das Ende der Parteien 1933* (Düsseldorf, 1960), pp. 319 and 327.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Brüning resigned as German Chancellor on May 30, 1932; cf. Volume III, Nos. 114-16 and 129.

<sup>7</sup> On June 1, 1933, a decree had come into force in Germany according to which any German wishing to visit Austria, except on business, had to obtain a visa costing 1,000 marks permitting him to leave Germany; cf. Volume V, No. 180.

<sup>8</sup> For an account of the German foreign exchange position in March 1934, see Volume VI, Appendix II, No. (ii).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. No. 44, note 4.

there was a notable increase in the number of foreign tourists, partly owing to Oberammergau<sup>10</sup> and partly to a veritable invasion of Dutchmen who swarmed over the border for their holidays under the lure of a 60% reduction in railway fares and Register Marks. The weather has been ideal. In consequence the holiday resorts admit to having had the best season within memory. Further, the hoarding of foodstuffs and the purchases, stimulated by lack of confidence in the Mark, may well have caused an artificial and temporary improvement in the home market. Lastly, as Dr. Darré<sup>11</sup> pointed out at Nuremberg,<sup>12</sup> the prices of agricultural products have risen to twice or three times the level of world prices. Hence possibly the smile on the face of the agriculturalist. Mr. Consul Livingston, who confined his tour to the industrial areas in his district, returned with a very pessimistic impression. His views are borne out by a study of the available statistics and by the accounts which reach me from well informed sources. I am afraid therefore that it is misleading to look at Germany only through the rose tinted glass of a motor windscreen.

5. The political outlook is less disturbing. It was perhaps fortunate for Herr Hitler that the late President, whose days were already numbered, should have disappeared when he did.<sup>13</sup> He lived long enough to approve the bloody deeds of June 30th and he died soon enough to enable Herr Hitler to obtain an overwhelming vote of confidence nominally on his assumption of the presidency, but as much really on his suppression of the so-called revolt. Nevertheless June 30th has left a nasty taste and some nasty problems. Chief amongst these is the organisation and status of the S.A. Before the revolt the nation was told that the S.A. were the torchbearers of the revolution, the salt of the nation and the main pillars of the régime. The subsequent revelations of the mode of life of the higher command and the admission that money collected from the public had been misspent brought about a general feeling of disillusionment. At the same time it was announced that an end would be put to the militarisation of the S.A. and that the Reichswehr must be the sole armed body. The separation of the S.S. from the S.A. and the decision no longer to give Cabinet rank to the S.A. Chief of Staff caused the S.A. to lose caste still further. Finally it became known that the policy of reducing the numbers of the S.A. was causing friction in government circles. In fact it became difficult to conceal that the S.A. were now more of a liability than an asset. It is not surprising that the prestige of the corps has fallen sadly and that the moral [*sic*] of the men has been affected. Nor are the constant speeches of Herr Hitler and his lieutenants likely to restore it. I am told that difficulty is experienced in inducing those still in uniform to attend meetings and parades upon ordinary occasions. So far no official announcement has been made regarding the reduction in numbers

<sup>10</sup> The tercentenary production of the Passion Play was being given in Oberammergau in 1934.

<sup>11</sup> Reich Minister of Food and Agriculture.

<sup>12</sup> The Nazi Party Congress was held at Nuremberg, September 5-10, 1934.

<sup>13</sup> President von Hindenburg died on August 2, 1934; cf. Volume VI, No. 555.

and it is said that the Reichswehr are pressing for a more rapid and a more radical reduction than the S.A. leaders are prepared to agree to. The question of the choice of the men to be disbanded is also causing some difficulty. It is obviously risky to discharge a large number of unemployed or unemployables. Yet if these elements are retained it means discharging the best type of man and so impairing the value of the force.

6. The fall from grace of the S.A. has brought about the rise of the S.S. Until June 30th the S.S. were an integral part of the S.A. and the S.S. Commander, Herr Himmler, was at least nominally subordinate to Stabschef Röhm. The position may now be said to be almost reversed. Not only is the S.S. an independent corps, but its chief is head of the political police throughout Germany. The personal guards furnished by the Party are now exclusively drawn from the S.S. At the S.S. and S.A. parade at Nuremberg this month, it was significant that Herr Himmler stood on Herr Hitler's right and the S.A. Chief of Staff on his left, whereas last year Stabschef Röhm alone stood at the Führer's side. The S.S. will probably play an important rôle in the future. They are individually far superior to the S.A. and were, indeed, deliberately created by Herr Hitler as a counterweight to the S.A. What they lack in numbers, they make up for in education, discipline and cold brutality. Their services on June 30th earned them the thanks of the Government, and this fact combined with their identification with the secret police has made them unpopular both with the S.A. and the general public. It is hoped in many quarters that Nemesis may fall upon them in the shape of action by the Reichswehr. This is at most a possibility, but the S.S. with the 'Gestapo' behind them are not likely to fall an easy prey to their enemies.

7. Another serious problem is that of the Churches. As regards the Catholic Church, no conclusion has yet been reached in the endeavour made three or four months ago to agree upon a mutually acceptable interpretation of the Concordat.<sup>14</sup> Although Herr von Papen is regarded by many Catholics in Germany as a traitor for his negotiation of the Concordat, his retirement from the position of Vice Chancellor and from the Cabinet<sup>15</sup> weakens the Catholic position. There is probably no factor which influences the policy of the German Government more to-day than the Saar plebiscite. When this has been disposed of, the extreme Nazis will doubtless press for energetic measures against the Catholic Church and a renewal of the 'Kulturkampf' is expected in many quarters.

8. For the moment the dissident Protestants are bearing the brunt. Dismissals of pastors are the order of the day and some have even been arrested. Bavaria and Württemberg have been forcibly incorporated by the Reichsbishop<sup>16</sup> into the Reich Church. The Bishop of Württemberg has been

<sup>14</sup> A Concordat between the Holy See and the German Reich had been signed on July 20, 1933. Cf. Volume VI, No. 399 and No. 405, paragraphs 11-13; see also *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 50, 195, 212, 215, and 216.

<sup>15</sup> On his appointment as German Minister at Vienna; cf. No. 10.

<sup>16</sup> For the appointment on May 26, 1933, of the first Reich Bishop for the Evangelical churches of Germany, see Volume V, Appendix, No. (v). In 1934 this position was held by Dr. Ludwig Müller. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, *op. cit.*, Nos. 211 and 213.

suspended by Bishop Mueller and a like fate appears to threaten the dissident Bishop of Bavaria. These events led to public demonstrations in Munich and elsewhere, which had to be dispersed by the police. The dissident pastors and laity argue that their protests are based purely on religious grounds and have no political flavour. This is doubtless true, but the Nazi leaders are behind the Reichsbishop and regard the unification of the Protestant Church as a political necessity to be achieved at any cost, even that of establishing an open schism.

9. In the field of foreign policy the outlook is definitely disquieting and discouraging. The events of June 30th and July 25th shocked and alarmed all sections of world opinion including those which had been inclined to take Nazism at its own valuation. More important perhaps was the effect of the murder of Dr. Dollfuss on Italo-German relations. The Italian press with its customary agility executed a rapid 'volte-face' and launched a vituperative attack on heathen barbarism; worse still German culture was held up to ridicule. The German press was obviously disturbed by this turn of events, but it could scarcely remain silent without sacrificing the sacred principle of Gleichberechtigung. A brisk exchange of home truths followed which will rankle for some time and make it difficult to restore the happy atmosphere of the Venetian idyll.<sup>17</sup>

10. A ship in the doldrums is never a happy ship. Even the man in the street here has ceased to believe in the myth of a happy band of Nazi brothers pulling together towards a common goal. There may be said to be three main factions contending for the possession of Herr Hitler, for during his lifetime it is recognised that none can succeed without him. The first faction consists of General Göring supported by Herr Seldte<sup>18</sup> and the Stahlhelm and by those who dislike the idea of Reichsreform. The second, which consists of Herr Himmler with the S.S. and the 'Gestapo' is the praetorian guard of the régime and favours Reichsreform. The third faction includes Dr. Goebbels with the Nazi political organisations, supported by Dr. Ley<sup>19</sup> and the radical elements of the party. It is difficult to follow the moves and counter-moves of these three groups which are constantly manœuvring for position. General Göring, who last year was thought to be falling behind, suffered another blow when he was obliged to hand the Prussian political police over to Herr Himmler.<sup>20</sup> But the events of June 30th brought him once more to the front as the Leader's trusty henchman and greatly strengthened his position. Herr Himmler has also profited by the elimination of Stabschef Röhm and by the consequent rise of the S.S. Dr. Goebbels appeared to have lost a little ground, for both General Göring and Herr Himmler were known to be his antagonists.

<sup>17</sup> A reference to Herr Hitler's visit to Venice from June 14 to 16, 1934; see Volume VI, No. 462. See also *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 5, 6, 7, 10, and 19.

<sup>18</sup> Reich Minister of Labour, formerly leader of the Stahlhelm; cf. Volume V, Appendix, No. (viii), enclosure.

<sup>19</sup> Leader of the German Labour Front.

<sup>20</sup> On April 20, 1934; cf. Volume VI, No. 404.

11. After June 30th it was hoped by the Right that Herr Hitler would be driven into the arms of the Reichswehr and of the old officialdom. After the elimination of Röhm, which was attributed largely to pressure from the Reichswehr, it was hoped by the Right that pressure from the same quarter would cause the disappearance of Dr. Goebbels, Dr. Darré, Dr. Ley, Herr Baldur von Schirach<sup>21</sup> and other left wing leaders. Dr. Goebbels is almost universally feared and disliked. It was rumoured that he would be translated to the Embassy at Warsaw. The others, it was said, had committed suicide, or had been arrested or were about to be dismissed. The Ministry of Propaganda issued constant démentis and threatened the propagators of these rumours with dire penalties. It soon became apparent that the Left Wing were not prepared to be side-tracked. Dr. Goebbels continued to make his customary public appearances, opening exhibitions and addressing mass assemblies of the S.A. on the events of June 30th. Dr. Ley asserted himself by dismissing officials of the Labour Front for failing to carry out his orders. Herr Baldur von Schirach paid an ostentatious visit to Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden and addressed the nation on the wireless. At the Nuremberg Party Day it was the Party Organisation, that is to say, Dr. Goebbels and his men, who had the limelight and received bouquets from the Führer. It looks as though they had consolidated their position, at all events for the present.

12. Meanwhile, Herr Hitler continues to balance himself like a circus acrobat riding three horses, and he may possibly maintain this uncomfortable position indefinitely. It is now nearly two months since the late President died, and a law was passed conferring the Presidency on Herr Hitler and providing that he should appoint a deputy. This appointment has not yet been made.

13. Meanwhile, Herr Hitler's prestige in the country seems as high as ever. The Party Day at Nuremberg, for all the artificiality of the showmanship, must be regarded as a signal personal triumph. The last issue of the 'Sopadé', a private publication brought out by the Social Democratic party at Prague, contains reports from a number of correspondents in Germany. With a few exceptions all sorrowfully admit that the Chancellor has never stood higher in popular esteem. Some even express the opinion that his Reichstag speech on July 13th<sup>22</sup> actually strengthened his hold.

14. There is another consideration to be borne in mind. The Fascist formula of government rests on the ruthless elimination of all opposition. There is no other government ready to step into the saddle and the country is left with two alternatives, either the indefinite toleration of the régime or chaos.<sup>23</sup> It is not surprising that many patriotic Germans, who are not fervid supporters of pure Nazism, prefer Herr Hitler to the alternative.

15. There is, of course, the Reichswehr, the arbiter of Germany's post-war destiny. Herr Hitler is now its Commander-in-Chief. The officers and men

<sup>21</sup> Leader of the Hitler Youth; cf. *ibid.*, No. 527.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. No. 44, note 7.

<sup>23</sup> A marginal comment by Mr. Sargent at this point read: 'What about the Reichswehr as an alternative government?'

are bound to him by an oath of personal loyalty. The demands of the Higher Command in regard to the demilitarisation of the S.A. and recruitment have been met. The rapid expansion of the army is providing accelerated promotion for the officers; some are going up two steps at a time. The days of a parsimonious Social-Democratic treasury are past. The soldier is held up to the nation as the pattern of civic virtue. It is not surprising that the Chancellor enjoys the support of the Reichswehr as a whole, however much individual officers may dislike certain features of the régime.

16. At a time when all classes are viewing the coming winter with deep anxiety Herr Hitler's personality is the Government's most valuable asset. His power to hypnotise the masses seems as strong as ever. His appearances still give rise to hysterical demonstrations of affection; men and women kiss the ground where he has stood. So long as this gift remains unimpaired the German people are likely to follow him through the Valley of Discontent. But it would be wise to emerge as soon as possible into the Promised Land, for there is a limit to human patience. In German history the idols of the day have often been delivered to the flames on the morrow. Conditions have changed, however, and it remains to be seen whether a ruthless and determined clique, supported by the inventions of modern science, particularly the power to address every individual in the country through the radio, can overcome ingrained national tendencies.<sup>24</sup>

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>24</sup> A minute on this despatch by Mr. Wigram read: 'This is a very interesting review of the situation: it provides fresh support for the view that we should "Keep Germany lean". Nothing is inevitable in Germany—and I am sure we should give nothing away to them on the theory that anything is inevitable. R. F. Wigram. 28/9.'

## No. 121

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 28, 4.25 p.m.)*  
*No. 60 L.N. Saving: Telegraphic [C 6521/247/18]*

GENEVA, September 27, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

I had a conversation with M. Litvinov this evening before his departure from Geneva. M. Litvinov stated that he had still some hopes of the conclusion of the Eastern Pact. The German answer<sup>1</sup> was most discouraging, for, while in form it was not decisive, the spirit behind it was negative. The Polish attitude, however, had recently undergone some improvement.<sup>2</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 85.

<sup>2</sup> A copy of the Polish Government's reply, dated September 27, to the French Government on the subject of the Eastern Pact was communicated by M. Barthou to the United Kingdom delegation at Geneva on September 28. An English translation of the text is printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 226. The Polish memorandum, while not containing a definite rejection of the proposals of the French and Soviet Governments, stated



and M. Barthou had had several conversations on the subject with M. Beck. In the main, the Polish objections were those stated by M. Beck to me (see Geneva telegram No. 65)<sup>3</sup> but they had undergone some slight modification; for instance, whereas in the past M. Beck had said with reference to Lithuania that he would sign no Pact with a country with which he was not in relations, all he now stated was that he could not enter into relations with Lithuania. He did not refuse to sign the Pact on this account and M. Litvinov hopes that this particular objection might be overcome by adding a rider to the effect that once normal relations had been established between Poland and Lithuania, the Pact could become operative between them. The most formidable of Poland's conditions was, of course, the signature of Germany. None the less, M. Litvinov had the impression that Poland was now much less averse to participating in the Pact than she had been and that whereas a few weeks ago there was a real danger of a German-Polish-Japanese rapprochement (he described it as the creation of a rival League of Nations), that danger was now, he thought, removed.

In a reference to Soviet Russia's entry into the League,<sup>4</sup> M. Litvinov remarked that he was afraid that he had acted in advance of public opinion in his country and that his position in the next few months would be difficult. Propaganda would be needed to educate public opinion in Russia to a belief in the League!

As to the future of disarmament, M. Litvinov maintained that the Conference had always suffered from its title. Disarmament, as such, was not practical politics at the present time, but it was still possible to do work for security. He was still anxious to see the creation of his Permanent Peace Conference<sup>5</sup> and would like to talk over that matter with us when next the Council met.

In conclusion M. Litvinov maintained that the situation in Europe was by no means as dark as it was sometimes painted. The relations between certain of the Great Powers had materially improved and he was particularly gratified at the improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations. The chief danger lay perhaps in the mutual irritation that seemed to exist between Italy and Yugoslavia.

that the Polish Government did not wish to jeopardize the German-Polish Agreement of January 26, 1934, by entering into negotiations for a multilateral pact, and that German signature of the Eastern Pact was a *sine qua non* of Polish acceptance.

<sup>3</sup> Volume VII, No. 627.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 88, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. M. Litvinov's speech at the 12th plenary meeting of the League of Nations' Assembly, September 27, 1934, printed in *L.N.O.J., S.S. No. 125*, p. 76.

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 29)*  
*No. 61 L.N. Saving: Telegraphic [C 6522/74/18]*

GENEVA, September 27, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

My telegram No. 43 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

*Saar Plebiscite.* The rapporteur (Baron Aloisi) submitted to Council this afternoon further report of Council Committee.

Report states that several Governments have responded favourably to the appeal for assistance in recruiting of reinforcements for the gendarmerie. The Governing Commission has already taken steps to increase the present police forces by local recruitment, and intends also to recruit outside the territory. Recruiting will, in normal circumstances, be kept within modest proportions. In the event of grave disturbances, however, the Governing Commission states that it will have to seek other measures.

Report adds that in execution of the extended mandate conferred by the Council, the Committee has undertaken the study of various documents submitted to it, including in particular the recent French memorandum.<sup>2</sup> For this purpose it has approached both Governments concerned, and the German Government has instructed the German Minister at Berne to maintain contact with the Committee. The urgent questions requiring consideration are the position of Saar officials after the plebiscite; the question of Saar loans placed outside the territory; Saar claims on foreign countries; and the question of social insurances contracted in the territory.

Report ends by saying that the Committee hopes to present a further report to the Council in November.

The French representative (M. Barthou), referring to the question of public order, said that if, as he hoped would not be the case, the police forces proved inadequate, the French Government would not seek to evade its special responsibilities. The first essential was that the French and German Governments should loyally observe the undertakings they gave on June 2nd.<sup>3</sup> The French Government did not exclude any one of the three possible solutions contemplated by the Treaty, and preparations should be made for each of them. It was imperative to define in advance of the plebiscite the nature of the régime that would be set up if the result of the plebiscite were the maintenance of government by the League. A special session of the Council should be held as early as possible to discuss this question. The views of the French Government on this matter were clearly stated in their recent memorandum. The Council would also have to deal with the question of Saar officials and their pensions, and the question of Saar loans. The solution of certain problems had been reached in June last by common agreement. He trusted that there would be a peaceful settlement in the future in strict

<sup>1</sup> No. 82.      <sup>2</sup> Of August 31, 1934; cf. No. 75, note 16.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 75, paragraph 2.

conformity with the treaties and on the strength of their full and reciprocal observance.

I said that I had no observations to make upon the Committee's report, which professed to do little more than outline the work that still remained to be done. But I trusted that the Council would in due course be placed in a position to take the decisions incumbent upon it upon the many questions which still had to be settled.

The President (M. Benes) paid a tribute to the impartiality, firmness and courage of Mr. Knox and the other members of the Governing Commission. He thanked the Council Committee for their work, and suggested that the Council should be called again in the first half of November to deal with the Saar.

The Council then adopted its Committee's report and decided to meet again on the 15th November.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For a fuller version of this debate see *L.N.O.J.*, November 1934, pp. 1460-4.

## No. 123

### *Note for the Secretary of State*<sup>1</sup>

[C 6883/247/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 27, 1934*

The Secretary of State noted in a minute of September 20th<sup>2</sup> that it was necessary to have a thorough discussion of the question of the desirability of promoting a German-Dutch non-aggression pact.

When the question of a British declaration respecting the security of Belgium was under discussion in the summer the Secretary of State pointed out to the Cabinet, in a memorandum of June 14th (DCM 32/119)<sup>3</sup> that Holland had from the air point of view an importance to us practically equal to that of Belgium, and that it would be an advantage if we could secure from the German Chancellor a declaration of his intention to respect Dutch independence or an offer to conclude a pact of non-aggression with Holland. The point was discussed, though inconclusively, by the Ministerial Committee on June 11th and again on June 21st.

It has not yet been possible to hold the discussion mentioned in the Secretary of State's minute of September 20th. It might, in some ways, have seemed better to leave the Dutch question until we were in a position to make a declaration as regards Belgian security more definite than the remarks contained in the Secretary of State's speech in the House of Commons on July 13th and than the reference to England's frontier being the Rhine made in Mr. Baldwin's speech in the debate on the Air Force expansion on the

<sup>1</sup> This note was prepared in the Central Department, apparently by Mr. Wigram.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 58, note 6.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

30th July.<sup>4</sup> But it seems not impossible that the Belgian question at least will now be left over for the time being, possibly until after the next general election. If that proves to be the case, the result would be that we shall be postponing—possibly for two years—any encouragement to the Dutch to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany. And at the end of those two years the German capacity for aggression will almost certainly have been greatly increased; and it is quite likely that Germany will then be unwilling to honour the offer of non-aggression pacts made by Herr Hitler last year.<sup>5</sup>

But although H.M. Government can take no overt action themselves in present circumstances as regards either Belgian or Dutch security, it might be possible—and would certainly be useful—to ensure that Germany's existing undertaking not to attack Belgium should as far as possible be extended to Holland. Germany's undertaking as regards Belgium is of course contained in the Locarno Treaty. A corresponding undertaking as regards Holland would most conveniently take the form of a bilateral non-aggression pact such as Herr Hitler offered last year to negotiate with all Germany's neighbours.

But, according to Sir H. Montgomery's reports, the Dutch Government in their present mood are most unlikely to take the initiative of asking either for a security guarantee from us or even for a non-aggression pact from Germany. If therefore negotiations for a non-aggression pact are to be started between Germany and Holland, it will almost certainly have to be upon a German initiative: and such an initiative is most improbable unless we foster it.

In these circumstances it may be thought desirable that if and when a convenient opportunity offers we should urge the German Government to make some definite offer of a non-aggression pact to Holland.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 26, notes 3 and 4.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 87, note 4.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes on this note by Sir R. Vansittart and Sir J. Simon read: 'I am on the whole in favour of taking the action suggested in the last paragraph. R.V. Sept. 28.' 'The action seems to me very difficult. Can we suggest this to Germany without ascertaining Holland's view? And what is the value of Germany's promise? J.S. Oct. 12.'

## No. 124

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received September 29)*

*No. 205 Saving: Telegraphic [R 5330/37/3]*

BERLIN, September 28, 1934

The outcome of the negotiations for a new Guarantee declaration on behalf of Austria<sup>1</sup> has aroused some derisive comment here. The official view is

<sup>1</sup> In Geneva telegram No. 92 L.N. of September 27 (received at 9.30 a.m. on September 28) Mr. Eden reported that the following communiqué was being issued that night: 'After having proceeded to a fresh examination of Austrian situation, representatives of France, United Kingdom and Italy have agreed in the name of their governments to recognise that declaration of February 17th regarding necessity of maintaining independence and integrity

summed up in the brief statement that the new declaration 'does not affect German policy, as no danger threatens Austria's independence from the German side'.

'Berliner Tageblatt' observes that the labour of mountains has ended with the birth of a mouse.

The 'Frankfurter Zeitung' emphasises the want of logic which leads certain States, members of the League, to guarantee what the League itself already guarantees, viz. the independence of every one of its members. It is the League and not any clique within the League which ought to furnish any desired guarantee.

Most Nazi newspapers ignore the matter though a few point out that the danger to Austria, if any, proceeds from the Austrian people themselves who are overwhelmingly Nazi and cannot be trusted to vote at an election.

of Austria in accordance with treaties in force retains its full effect and will continue to inspire their common policy.' Cf. *The Times*, September 28, p. 14. The text of the communiqué had been agreed by Mr. Baldwin and Sir J. Simon on September 27.

## No. 125

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 4)*

*No. 1170 E. [C 6613/90/18]*

BERLIN, September 28, 1934

Sir,

With reference to my telegram No. 201 Saving of the 21st September,<sup>1</sup> I have the honour to transmit to you, herewith, a record, compiled by Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, of a conversation which he had with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 25th September.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

### ENCLOSURE IN NO. 125\*<sup>2</sup>

*Note by Sir F. Leith-Ross of an interview with Herr von Neurath*

Herr von Neurath received me on the 25th September. Speaking most warmly, he said he was delighted to have a talk with me, and he hoped very much that an agreement would be possible with England. The difficulties of Germany were at the moment very great, and he feared that there was going to be a bad winter. He hoped that people in London would appreciate these difficulties.

I said that we fully recognised the difficulties of Germany, but we thought that they had been increased by the policy followed by the German authorities.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram, not printed, was an account by Sir F. Leith-Ross, for the Treasury and Board of Trade, of a conversation with Dr. Schacht on September 21.

<sup>2</sup> Only a Confidential Print text of this enclosure has been preserved in Foreign Office archives.

We did not criticise the internal expansion of credit which was necessary to reduce unemployment. Deflation had been carried too far, and there was a temporary stage during which German imports would tend to increase while exports might be reduced. This had happened in other countries, but the normal method of meeting this difficulty was by increased credits from abroad. Unfortunately, Germany had lost her credit, and Dr. Schacht told me that he knew it and did not care. This seemed to me a reckless attitude. However, if credits were not available, then the mark could not be maintained. We had no special interest in depreciation of the mark, but the present equilibrium was precarious and largely pretence.

Herr von Neurath agreed with all I said. He recognised that Germany needed credit and he deplored her actual position in the eyes of the world, which he understood. As regards the mark, he and all his people were convinced that it would have to be devalued, but there was still the inflation complex in Germany and the time and manner would have to be carefully chosen.

I said that we found it very difficult to understand Dr. Schacht's policy. Before I left for this mission,<sup>3</sup> the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said to me: 'Is Dr. Schacht mad? Why does he want to alienate his best friends?' So far as I could make anything of his policy, it seemed to be based on the belief that the German market was so important for world trade that he could force the world to give him goods on credit by the threat of otherwise not importing them. If so, it seemed to me that he was making a miscalculation. People did not act like this.

Herr von Neurath said that Dr. Schacht was very dogmatic and difficult. He agreed that other countries could not be expected to supply Germany if they were not paid. Dr. Schacht took too intellectual a standpoint.

I agreed, and said that if there was to be a competition in suicide we should last longer than Germany.

I then summarised very briefly the questions which I had been discussing with the German officials. I feared that I should have to make a very unsatisfactory report to my Ministers. First of all, as regards long-term loans, last summer we had agreed that only the interest on the Dawes and Young Loans should be paid in cash.<sup>4</sup> Herr von Neurath interrupted to say that I no doubt knew the difficulty he had had in getting Dr. Schacht to agree even to this. I told him that Dr. Schacht had said that he was doubtful if the undertaking could be carried out, but that I had replied that I did not believe that Germany would go back on its engagement. Herr von Neurath said that Dr. Schacht had said the same thing to him, but apparently he did not take the statement seriously.

I went on to say that our creditors for the other loans had offered to take funding bonds on condition that all the other creditors accepted the same treatment. In fact the Swiss and Dutch were getting 4½ per cent. paid in

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 83, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> A reference to the Anglo-German Transfer Agreement of July 4, 1934; cf. No. 24, note 3.

cash, and our people would naturally expect the same. We had been criticised at home on the ground that we had hastily committed ourselves to a funding bond and other countries that had sat tight had got better terms. Herr von Neurath said he did not know why better terms had been given to the Swiss, but no doubt it was due to the threat of a clearing [? agreement]. He could quite understand that our people would want the same terms.

I then turned to the frozen debts<sup>5</sup> and said that the Government at home was much embarrassed by the agitation which had arisen. They felt that these debts had a very strong claim to early satisfaction, and they had suggested that as a first step the small claims, which could be satisfied for a total of £180,000, should be paid off at once. I hoped that something could be done about this, but the German officials had given me very little encouragement, and had said that the only method by which anything could be arranged was by means of a clearing. Herr von Neurath said he feared it would be very difficult to persuade the Reichsbank to provide exchange for these frozen debts.

I then took up the question of future trade, and said that we could not submit to our exports of coal and herrings being cut off by Germany, and that if they took measures to restrict our exports to Germany, we should be bound to restrict German exports to England. Thus the trade on both sides would be reduced, to nobody's advantage. On this question, again, the German officials could give me no assurance, except through a clearing. Was it not possible to make an agreement which safeguarded our interests without a clearing?

Herr von Neurath said his Department was very much against these clearings. They were taking away all the foreign exchange resources from the Reichsbank, and he was afraid it would make the purchase of raw materials more and more difficult. I said I agreed with this, but once clearing agreements were started they tended to spread, as they facilitated imports into Germany from the clearing countries and diverted trade. I instanced the case of cotton yarns being bought from Switzerland, although the Swiss yarns cost 20 per cent. more than the English.<sup>6</sup>

I then said that if we had to have a clearing arrangement it would be a very complicated matter, as there were so many intricate financial and other invisible transactions between the two countries. I would have to report back to my Government on the whole situation. I did not know what they would decide, but my personal view was that at first, at any rate, it would be best to limit a clearing to the goods traffic between the two countries, so as to liquidate the sondermark account<sup>7</sup> and provide something for frozen debts, leaving the balance as a free surplus to the Reichsbank on condition that the

<sup>5</sup> A reference to the unpaid commercial debts incurred before the coming into force of the Anglo-German Exchange Agreement relating to Commercial Payments of August 10, 1934 (see No. 8). Cf. also No. 24 and *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 250.

<sup>6</sup> A German-Swiss Clearing Agreement had come into operation on July 26, 1934.

<sup>7</sup> i.e. the special Reichsmark account at the Reichsbank set up under article I of the Anglo-German Exchange Agreement of August 10, 1934, *op. cit.*

financial obligations were duly met. Herr von Neurath said that he personally would welcome such an arrangement. He did not know the technical details, but it seemed to him that it would be much more sensible to have a limited arrangement like this than to attempt a complete clearing on everything.

We then talked generalities, during which Herr von Neurath said that he had had a very troubled time since June, what with the events in Germany, the assassination of Dr. Dollfuss and the death of the President. He feared fresh troubles during the next winter.

I said that I hoped they would not be of the same kind.

Herr von Neurath replied that he sincerely hoped not. He was not a Nazi and refused to become one. After the Dollfuss assassination he had tendered his resignation and told Hitler that he was tired of the whole business, but Hitler had said that he must keep at his post for ten years. The result was that he was coming to be on increasingly good terms with Hitler. His position in the Cabinet was curious. Though he was one of the few members of the Cabinet who were 'not in uniform', the result of his close relations with Hitler was that now the Nazi members of the Cabinet were continually coming to him for support, so that he thought he had some influence on their policy. He sent his warmest greetings to the Chancellor and to Mr. Runciman,<sup>8</sup> and asked me to tell them he would do all he could to get an agreement with us.

<sup>8</sup> i.e. to Mr. Neville Chamberlain and to the President of the Board of Trade.

## No. 126

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 4)*

*No. 191 [R 5425/37/3]*

VIENNA, September 29, 1934

Sir,

The news of the signature by the representatives at Geneva of the British, French and Italian Governments of the declaration regarding the independence of Austria<sup>1</sup> was received in Vienna in time for the Chancellor to be able to announce it in the course of a speech which he delivered on September 27th under the auspices of the Austrian League of Nations Union.

2. The Austrian Press had begun to show signs of impatience at the delays which have taken place at Geneva in producing a final draft of the declaration, and Dr. Schuschnigg's announcement of its signature neither betrayed nor was received with any noticeable enthusiasm.

3. On the following day the official 'Wiener Zeitung' published an interview with Baron Berger-Waldenegg, in which the latter said that the signature of the declaration by no means marked the end of the negotiations, but

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 124, note 1.



merely formed the basis for further negotiations which Austria would undertake with the other Powers. 'Austria now constitutes the link between the Great Powers, who have come together on the common platform of a European policy towards Austria.' The Minister for Foreign Affairs further expressed the gratitude of the Austrian Government at His Majesty's Government having, at the last minute, overcome apparent qualms and signed the declaration—an act which, he said, was an exceptional concession on the part of the British statesmen. The 'Neue Freie Presse', in commenting on these statements, observed that the participation of the United Kingdom in the declaration was a proof that all the reports which had emanated from certain sources regarding England's alleged withdrawal of interest in Austria's external position were false and misleading. The newspaper concluded that the delay in bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion had been due to certain influences which had sought to introduce into the conversations regarding the safeguarding of Austrian independence problems which had nothing whatever to do with the matter in hand.

4. The Chancellor's speech referred to above, which had been widely heralded in the Press and for which many invitations had been issued, covered much the same ground as his speech to the League Assembly.<sup>2</sup> It was, however, noticeable that, in the course of his survey of Austria's position in Europe, Dr. von Schuschnigg referred more than once to his country's keen desire for friendship with whatever country could extend to her a friendly hand—a clear hint to Germany—whereas the subject of Austro-Italian relations was never once mentioned. In this connection account must doubtless be taken of the Chancellor's adoption, when addressing a Viennese audience, of a somewhat different attitude to that pursued at Geneva. Being both a more able and a more careful judge of popular sentiment than Prince Starhemberg, Dr. von Schuschnigg is doubtless fully alive to the intense distaste with which Austrians as a whole, not excluding the majority of his own supporters, view their country's fraternisation with and dependence on Italy, and is accordingly careful, when in Vienna, to minimise Austria's need of foreign support. Nevertheless, it may perhaps be inferred that the Chancellor, while carefully avoiding any violent or dramatic step which might prematurely arouse the concern of the Heimwehr wing of the Government, is beginning cautiously to prepare the ground for an orientation of his policy in a direction more sympathetic to the moderate Pan-German elements and, for that matter, to the Austrian peasantry as a whole.

5. As regards the Social-Democrats, the releases during the past fortnight of General Schneller, a former Schutzbund leader, Herr Hovvatek, a Socialist Deputy, Herr Weber, a former member of the Vienna Municipality and, as reported in my telegram No. 118<sup>3</sup> of September 25th, Frau Postranetzky, a member of the party executive, are further indications of the Government's desire to placate the moderate left, though, it must be admitted, the concessions

<sup>2</sup> Presumably a reference to Dr. von Schuschnigg's speech on September 14. See *L/N.O.J.*, *S.S. No. 125*, pp. 37-41.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

so far made cannot be regarded as calculated to win over the bulk of the Social-Democrats. The Press, in reporting these releases, publishes details regarding the number of Socialists still in prison awaiting trial—a fact which those in touch with Socialist circles consider suggests that the Government perhaps intends shortly to release all the Social-Democrats against whom no definite charges can be brought. On the other hand, it is announced that the properties of further leading émigré Socialist leaders have been confiscated. Considerable prominence continues to be given by the Press to the campaign instituted by Herr Grossauer, the (Under) Secretary of State for the Protection of Labour, for the popularisation of the new State Trades Union, the members of which are ‘doubtless’ to be accorded the right, ‘after a certain period’, to elect their officials.

6. The usual crop of trials of Nazi terrorists has led to the passing of five further death sentences, all of which, however, have been commuted. Arrests continue, but the trial of Dr. Rintelen<sup>4</sup> would appear to be indefinitely postponed, as he is reported to be suffering from loss of memory. His sympathisers continue to hint that he ‘knows too much’ to be brought to trial.

7. On September 27th the final decease of the Christian-Social party took place, and its leaders formally declared the incorporation of its members with the Patriotic Front.

I have, &c.,  
W. SELBY

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 49, note 5.

## No. 127

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 1, 7.45 p.m.)*

*No. 260 Saving: Telegraphic [C 6556/247/18]*

PARIS, October 1, 1934

When I saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning I took the opportunity of asking his view of the next step in regard to the Eastern Pact. Monsieur Barthou said that just as the Polish Government had kept him waiting a considerable time before furnishing him with their views, so he now intended to allow the matter to cool off before taking it up again. He had not yet had time to study the Polish reply<sup>1</sup> in detail but in his view neither this reply nor that of the Germans definitely slammed the door, but left open the possibility for further discussion.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 121, note 2.

No. 128

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 1, 7.45 p.m.)*

*No. 261 Saving: Telegraphic [C 6557/74/18]*

PARIS, October 1, 1934

When I saw M. Barthou today<sup>1</sup> I asked him for his views regarding the Saar. He told me that he did not consider the situation to be quite so serious as it appeared. Mr. Knox had left Geneva with tears not of despair but of gratitude for the assistance and encouragement which he had received there and it appeared that he was making satisfactory progress with the recruiting of his police which were being obtained chiefly from Luxembourg and Czechoslovakia. M. Barthou thought that there was now a reasonable prospect of no serious disorders occurring during the plebiscite.

2. I asked M. Barthou if he could tell me for my personal information what exactly were the legal grounds on which were based the claim of the Saar Governing Commission to call on French troops for the maintenance of order. M. Barthou said that there was no specific obligation to use French troops but that by the resolutions of the Council of March 1925 and March 1926<sup>2</sup> the Governing Commission was authorised to apply directly to neighbouring countries for troops without previous reference to the Council. In practice such troops could only be taken from France. M. Barthou was not in the least [<sup>?</sup> least] anxious for such a necessity to arise and he believed that it would not in fact arise.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 127.

<sup>2</sup> See *L.N.O.J.*, April 1925, p. 484, and *ibid.*, April 1926, pp. 527-8.

No. 129

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 309 Telegraphic [R 5331/37/3]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 2, 1934, 7 p.m.

Your telegram No. 289<sup>1</sup> suggests that Italian Government may attempt to read into Declaration of September 27th implications which it does not in fact carry. You should therefore take an early opportunity of mentioning to Signor Mussolini verbally that His Majesty's Government interpret declarations both of February 17th and September 27th as naturally implying and actually contemplating that their signatories shall keep in touch on the

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of September 29, not printed, said that the 'publication of the Anglo-French-Italian declaration regarding Austria [see No. 124, note 1]' had been very well received in the Italian press, where it was said that the declaration 'fully ratifies action taken by Italy in regard to Austria in the past and shows that in the future the policy of the three Powers in this field will continue on the lines already laid down'.

Austrian situation and shall not take action without consulting one another (see my telegram to Geneva No. 89).<sup>2</sup>

[Repeated to Paris, Vienna and Belgrade.]

<sup>2</sup> No. 114.

### No. 130

*Mr. Campbell<sup>1</sup> (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 5)*

*No. 264 Saving: Telegraphic [R 5450/37/3]*

PARIS, October 4, 1934

Your telegram No. 105 Saving.<sup>2</sup>

I made communication this afternoon to Acting Secretary General of Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He has since telephoned to say that they proposed to send similar instructions to French Ambassador in Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. R. H. Campbell was in charge of H.M. Embassy at Paris during the absence on leave of Sir G. Clerk from October 3 to 10.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram of October 2, not printed, referred to No. 129 and instructed Mr. Campbell to inform the French Government verbally of the interpretation of the Anglo-French-Italian declaration of September 27 contained therein.

### No. 131

*Letter from Mr. Sargent to Mr. Campbell (Paris)*

*[C 6631/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 5, 1934

Dear Ronnie,

Despite the fact that it appears from Paris telegram No. 261 Saving<sup>1</sup> of October 1st that Barthou is now happier as to the situation in the Saar, we think it very necessary that no precautionary measure should be neglected. As you will see from the enclosed copy of a letter<sup>2</sup> which Eden sent to the Secretary of State from Geneva, our delegation, after their interviews with Knox about a fortnight ago, were very disturbed regarding the position.

2. The point raised by Eden respecting Knox's personal safety need not bother you at the moment. But the other point respecting the readiness of French troops, should they be called upon by the Commission, is one on which we do want your help.

3. We sent you out on October 3rd an extra copy of the German print<sup>3</sup> of February 1st, 1934, containing a departmental memorandum on the right of the Saar Commission to call in French troops.<sup>4</sup> Heywood, who came in

<sup>1</sup> No. 128.

<sup>2</sup> The enclosure was a copy of Mr. Eden's letter of September 21 to Sir J. Simon; see No. 103, enclosure.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 75, note 4.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed.

here a few days ago, told us that he had the impression from a conversation with General Walch, the Military Governor of Strasbourg, that the French Government did not wish to move even in the elementary matter of making plans to be in a position adequately to respond to an appeal for troops without a previous invitation from the Council of the League, or at least without a reaffirmation of the Council decision of March 18th, 1926 (see paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of Foreign Office Memorandum of February 1st, 1934). Barthou's remarks reported in Geneva telegram No. 61 Saving<sup>5</sup> of September 27th do not confirm this. But we think that (without of course mentioning Walch) you might take an early opportunity in conversation with Léger to refer to Barthou's remarks at Geneva. You could ask what exactly are the arrangements about sending troops, should the need arise; for as Eden says in his letter to the Secretary of State, it evidently is vital that there should be a proper plan which will work with the utmost expedition and ensure effective results.

4. I understand that Heywood is still away: otherwise you might have thought it useful that he should also discuss the matter with the military authorities.

Yrs

ORME SARGENT

<sup>5</sup> No. 122.

## No. 132

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 8, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 303 Telegraphic [R 5485/37/3]*

ROME, October 7, 1934, 11.25 p.m.

Paris telegram No. 264 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Feeling that communications, more or less simultaneous and identic, from His Majesty's Government and French Government would be likely to rouse resentment in the mind of Italian Government who might consider suspicions were entertained as to their Austrian policy, I suggested to my French colleague this morning that he should delay acting on his instructions until I had had my interview with Signor Mussolini when I would develop thesis set out in your telegram No. 309.<sup>2</sup>

If Signor Mussolini accepted that interpretation (and his Milan speech<sup>3</sup> tended to show that he would) then I believed it would be wiser to leave well alone. If any difficulties arose I would again consult French Ambassador and of course in any case keep him informed.

<sup>1</sup> No. 130.

<sup>2</sup> No. 129.

<sup>3</sup> On October 6; cf. *The Times*, October 8, p. 14.

My French colleague shared my views and is telegraphing to his government accordingly.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 109 Saving of October 9 to Paris referred to Rome telegram No. 303 and continued: 'We agree with procedure proposed by Sir E. Drummond.'

### No. 133

*Letter from Sir N. Henderson (Belgrade) to Mr. Carr<sup>1</sup>*

[R 5801/30/92]

BELGRADE, October 8, 1934

My dear Carr,

Many thanks for your letter of the 27th September:<sup>2</sup> thanks also for your description of the Jugs as my protégés! They would not like to hear themselves so described. They object to being anybody's protégés and that is largely why their relations with the French have been somewhat cool of late. That in general; but also in particular because the French have shown a tendency recently to believe the Austro-Italian propaganda of Yugoslav flirtations with Germany and Yugoslav plots with Nazi refugees in this country. The best way to deal with the Serb is to pretend at least that you trust him. It makes him scratch his head and think that after all he had better live up to your opinion of him.

The French too have their little causes for anxiety. They are genuinely afraid of Yugoslavia following the example of Poland<sup>3</sup> and they have also been irritated by the King sending his eldest son to an English school.<sup>4</sup> Also the Yugoslavs have popped into gaol on a bribery and corruption charge a French woman who is or was or is reputed to be the mistress of some Frenchman not without influence in his own country. But I expect this temporary estrangement will be dispelled by the cataract of loving speeches which we may expect in Paris.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless I think it is true to say that the feeling both in highest circles and among the public in general in favour of being friends with England is steadily growing here. And in my humble opinion I think the Foreign Office will be unwise if you minimize the importance of this feeling. Our goodwill and advice can only be salutary and Yugoslavia is not such an unimportant pawn in the Central European and Balkan chequerboard. An Anglo-Little Entente bloc would indeed be a monstrosity,<sup>6</sup> fortunately an inconceivable

<sup>1</sup> This letter was filed in the Foreign Office on October 19.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. The opening sentence read: 'I have been here [i.e. in Geneva] for the Austrian question for the greater part of the last three weeks, and have seen a lot of your protégés.'

<sup>3</sup> A reference presumably to the recent German-Polish *rapprochement*; cf. No. 1, note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Crown Prince Peter of Yugoslavia was attending a preparatory school in Surrey.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 97, note 2.

<sup>6</sup> In his letter of September 27 Mr. Carr had said that the *Journal des Nations*, a paper 'popularly supposed to be in receipt of Yugoslav subsidies' had on one occasion 'predicted the birth of a new monstrosity in the political world—an Anglo-Little Entente bloc'.

one, but between that and too little attention to Yugoslavia there is a 'via media', which I recommend to your consideration.

As regards the Pourić disquisition on Yugoslav foreign policy with which you threaten me,<sup>7</sup> it will have to be postponed, if ever it take place, as I am leaving to-night for a trip to Austria.

Yrs ever

NEVILE HENDERSON

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Carr had written that M. Pourić, Political Director of the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs, proposed to ask Sir N. Henderson to call on him so that he could explain Yugoslav foreign policy.

### No. 134

*Record by Mr. Sargent of a conversation with Mr. Poliakoff*<sup>1</sup>

[C 6717/20/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 9, 1934*

Mr. Poliakoff, who has just returned from Paris, tells me that the Quai d'Orsay expect the German Government in the near future formally to denounce Part V of the Treaty of Versailles,<sup>2</sup> and are busy turning over in their minds how they are to deal with the situation which will thereby have been created.

In support of this report Mr. Poliakoff was told that both Sir Eric Phipps and the Belgian Minister in Berlin agreed that such action by the German Government was imminent. The alleged reason is that the Reichswehr are sick of the present 'illegal situation' and are exercising continuous and increasing pressure on Hitler and Neurath to legalise German rearmament by unilateral denunciation of the Treaty. In fact, it is rumoured that action in this sense was to have been taken at the beginning of this month<sup>3</sup> and was only delayed at the last moment by the intervention of the United States Government, who warned the German Government that although the United States were not parties to the Treaty of Versailles, it was to be remembered that they were parties to Part V of the Treaty, inasmuch as it is formally embodied in the German-American Peace Treaty.<sup>4</sup>

O. G. SARGENT<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Diplomatic correspondent of *The Times*.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the Part containing the military, naval, and air clauses.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Baron von Neurath's letter of July 27, 1934, to State Secretary Herr von Bülow 'regarding the supposed intention to abolish camouflage for the Reich Army as from October 1' printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Of August 25, 1921; see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 114, pp. 828-31.

<sup>5</sup> Copies of Mr. Sargent's note were sent on October 9 to Sir E. Phipps (in despatch No. 1142 to Berlin) and to Mr. Campbell (in despatch No. 1534 to Paris). These covering despatches, requesting observations on Mr. Poliakoff's statement, are not preserved in the Foreign Office archives.

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)**No. 878 [R 5528/37/3]*FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 9, 1934*

Sir,

In the course of a general talk to-day with Signor Grandi<sup>1</sup> upon his return from Italy, I took occasion to inform the Ambassador of the assurance given to Sir Nevile Henderson by the King of Yugoslavia, before the latter's departure on his voyage,<sup>2</sup> that while King Alexander was away the Yugoslav press campaign against Italy would be shut down (see Sir N. Henderson's telegram No. 18<sup>3</sup> of October 4th). I expressed the hope that the Italian Government would give similar orders on their side, as co-operation at this time to put an end to these press polemics would do much to improve the atmosphere. Signor Grandi undertook to report what I had said to Signor Mussolini.

2. In the course of the discussion on the Austrian situation, the Italian Ambassador observed that the part which Italy might play lay between three choices: the first was the pursuit of a line of policy in co-operation with France and Great Britain; the second was a policy shared between the Succession States and France in which Great Britain took no part; and the third was the policy of isolated action. Of these three Signor Mussolini much preferred the first, but if it came to an alternative between the second and third, he favoured the third rather than the second because he did not feel that he could trust all his partners if the second course were the one followed. I think this observation of the Italian Ambassador may very probably reproduce Signor Mussolini's own analysis, for it is very characteristic of his way of expressing himself, and Signor Grandi was with Signor Mussolini in Italy at and immediately after the time of the Dollfuss murder. I did not conceal my view that isolated action by Italy was much to be deprecated and Signor Grandi expressed his concurrence, observing that it was not a strong position for Italy. As for British co-operation, I said that the joint Declaration of last February continued to express our attitude and purpose. The significance of the Declaration of February was that it was a joint declaration and that implied that none of the three parties to it would take isolated action without consultation with the others. Signor Grandi expressed his accord with this view. I pointed out, moreover, that isolated action in regard to Austria by Italy, so far from weakening, would actually strengthen the activities of the other side with its Nazi sympathies. I thought that the matter had been left in its true setting as the result of our consultations at Geneva and I trusted that nothing would now occur to provoke a change. Signor Grandi reported that Signor Mussolini was very confident, too confident perhaps, that the Austrian position would be held; the latter had formed a good opinion of the Austrian Chancellor. I expressed the same

<sup>1</sup> Italian Ambassador at London.<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 97, note 2.<sup>3</sup> Received at 4.50 p.m. on October 4, not printed.



view, emphasising that the important thing was for the Great Powers to keep in touch. Herr Hitler, I thought, was disposed to leave Austria alone for the present, for the Saar provided a more immediate preoccupation. We were very glad that it was Baron Aloisi who was Chairman of the Saar Committee at Geneva.

3. Signor Grandi made no reference to any other matter arising between this country and Italy and expressed himself warmly as to his satisfaction at being Italy's representative in London and at the prospect of continuing in his present post.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

No. 136

*Letter from Mr. Sargent to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

[C 5747/20/18]

*Very confidential*

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 11, 1934

Dear Eric,

Paragraph 2 of Thorne's report to Newton of August 16th (enclosure to Berlin despatch No. 998<sup>1</sup> of August 20th) has caused us considerable reflexion. From it we learn that a 'fairly senior officer in the Reichswehrministerium' has been talking to our Military Attaché about the question whether the new German Air Force is being developed on the right lines and at the right pace. Little more than a year ago Herring, who was then Air Attaché, reported a far less incriminating conversation which he had had with an official in the German Air Ministry.<sup>2</sup> Since the conversation implied that the German Government were going to build an illegal air force, it was thought desirable that the Embassy should ask for an explanation, so that it might not be afterwards alleged that we had been informed of what the German Government were doing and had tacitly acquiesced in what was clearly a flagrant violation of the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. The German reply on that occasion was a sweeping repudiation of the remarks made.

2. When this incident occurred in the summer of 1933 there was still a hope that the Disarmament Conference might succeed; and there was therefore every inducement not to precipitate the question of Germany's illegal rearmament. It was in our interest to feign ignorance and in Germany's interest to practise secrecy until such time as the Conference should legalize what had been done.

3. Since then matters have deteriorated. There is now no prospect of a Disarmament Convention and not even of a legalization of Germany's illegal armaments. There is little inducement therefore to keep up appearances on either side. Besides, the continuous growth of Germany's armaments makes both secrecy and feigned ignorance increasingly difficult.

<sup>1</sup> No. 40.

<sup>2</sup> See Volume V, No. 223.

4. We have therefore been considering whether it is worth while maintaining our previous attitude; and whether the Berlin Embassy—and especially the Service Attachés—should not from now onwards in their intercourse with German Ministers and officials, proceed, so far as their German vis-à-vis are concerned, on the assumption that each side tacitly recognizes Germany's violation and Germany's intention to violate Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.

5. This indeed seems to be the line on which Thorne proceeded the other day; and it is clear that from the point of view of inspiring confidence in the official heart and eliciting confidences from the official mouth it has every convenience. For if every time a German Minister or official makes a statement in official or private conversation which implies some violation of the Treaty, the Embassy challenge the statement, the result will be (whether or not, as last year, the Germans repudiate the words used) that the Embassy as a whole and the Service Attachés in particular will find themselves more and more in a state of boycott in the matter of useful information from official quarters. Moreover, now that violation is becoming so frequent, repeated repudiation by the German Government would only make us look ridiculous; whilst if the Germans do not repudiate, we might find ourselves faced with an official declaration by the German Government that they do not any longer consider themselves bound by Part V of the Treaty. That would produce a very acute situation which we do not want to bring about at the present time if we can help it; and now that the prospects of legalization have vanished from German sight this is a possibility that can no longer be ignored.

6. We fully realise the objections to tacit acquiescence over an indefinite period in the flagrant violation of an international treaty, but on the other hand we must face the fact that we do not want Germany at the moment formally to denounce Part V; and that neither we nor the French (and none of the other signatories count) are anxious to arraign Germany before the League as treaty-breaker or to legalize the treaty breaches.

7. In these circumstances we have decided that there is nothing for it but to legalize Thorne's attitude on the lines laid down in paragraph 4. But naturally in the use of this new freedom the members of the Embassy will have to use the utmost discretion so as to avoid making the Embassy '*particeps criminis*'. It will also be highly desirable that the subject of this letter should not be mentioned outside the Embassy.<sup>3</sup>

8. Will you inform the members of the Embassy, and particularly the Service Attachés, as above?<sup>4</sup>

Yours ever

ORME SARGENT

<sup>3</sup> The substance of this letter was taken from a long minute by Mr. Sargent of October 1 on Berlin despatch No. 998 (No. 40). Other minutes were added. Sir R. Vansittart wrote on October 2: 'I agree with Mr. Sargent's reasoning. We may as well get what information we can.' Sir J. Simon wrote: 'I agree. But while the information is better than the pretence, much discretion will be needed to avoid becoming *particeps criminis*. J.S. Oct. 3.'

<sup>4</sup> Copies of No. 40 and of the draft of No. 136 above were sent to British representatives in Vienna, Budapest, and Sofia on October 10 with instructions that they should 'be guided by' the same considerations 'should similar incidents occur' at their posts.

*Letter from Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Mr. Sargent*  
[C 6829/74/18]

PARIS, October 12, 1934

My dear Sargent,

Your letter of October 5th.<sup>1</sup>

I took the opportunity of an interview with Massigli last Tuesday<sup>2</sup> morning on the control of civil aviation question to let him know informally what we feel about the French troops which might be called upon to go into the Saar being in such a state of preparedness as would allow of them moving immediately. I thought it better to begin on Massigli as he was perhaps the most likely person to tell me what the actual position was. According to what his answer was, we could then get to work in other quarters.

He said that certain preparations had of course already been made, but I gathered—a fact which you already knew—that they were not very extensive. The movement of French troops into the Saar, he said, might involve the virtual occupation of the territory. That was a very big operation. To be prepared to undertake it at a moment's notice would involve a considerable number of troops and preparations on a considerable scale. There was some reluctance to embark on the necessary arrangements for such an operation for a variety of reasons, one of which was that the maintenance of the necessary force in readiness in close proximity to the frontier would necessarily have a somewhat provocative appearance. No final decision had however been taken.

Massigli himself seemed rather to share your views, and he promised to mention in other quarters what I had said to him.

Since then, as you know, the Ambassador has returned.<sup>3</sup> He took the opportunity, when paying M. Doumergue a brief visit of sympathy yesterday,<sup>4</sup> to mention the matter to him personally. He reminded him that if the Governing Commission did have occasion to call for French troops, it would only be in the event of a sudden and serious emergency. In that case the troops would probably be useless if they could only move after twenty-four or forty-eight hours delay. It was a question of hours rather than days. It was a police operation for which the necessary preparations could, and should, be made in advance down to the last detail.

M. Doumergue said that the matter was being carefully studied. He seemed impressed by what had been said to him. The impression gained by the Ambassador was that the French Government sincerely hope that the occasion will not arise.

<sup>1</sup> No. 131.

<sup>2</sup> October 9.

<sup>3</sup> Sir G. Clerk resumed charge of H.M. Embassy at Paris on October 10.

<sup>4</sup> King Alexander of Yugoslavia and M. Barthou had been assassinated at Marseilles on October 9.

We will keep the question in mind and put in further words whenever and wherever we usefully can. We will of course avoid the appearance of making an *official* request.

Yours ever  
RONALD CAMPBELL

**No. 138**

*Letter from Mr. Knox (Saarbrücken) to Mr. Sargent*  
[C 6887/74/18]

*Confidential*

SAARBRÜCKEN, October 15, 1934

Dear Sargent,

Reverting to your letter of October 8th<sup>1</sup> it will be well that I put on record what the present position is, as known to me, in regard to the weighty question you raise in § 2.

I had towards the end of September a conversation—which I had sought—on the subject with Barthou. He began by reading me a letter from Pétain<sup>2</sup> on which he said he wished to have my views before uttering his. Pétain's letter raised three points of importance:

1. An eventual 'requisition' of French troops by the Governing Commission would have to be referred to the Cabinet. (This is in contradiction with the arrangement mentioned in my letter of August ?<sup>3</sup>—I keep no copies—which I had believed to be final).
2. For military intervention here only two battalions would be available and operations would have to be confined to the left bank of the Saar. The military authorities were, however, considering plans for a more extensive operation.
3. It would be desirable for political reasons that the Council should affirm that the Resolutions of 1925 and 1926<sup>4</sup> empowering the Governing Commission to appeal to troops stationed near the frontier meant French troops.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 103, note 3. In paragraph 2 of this letter Mr. Sargent wrote that the Paris Embassy had been asked 'to impress upon the French Government the vital need of having all their plans ready in case the Governing Commission appeal to them for troops'. See No. 137 above.

<sup>2</sup> Minister of War in M. Doumergue's cabinet, February–November 1934.

<sup>3</sup> It was suggested on the filed copy that this should read 'August 3rd'. In this letter to Mr. Sargent, Mr. Knox said that he had 'naturally sounded the French Government as to what they would do in such an event. The first time, more than a year ago, I got the answer that I could count on nothing more than the "gardes mobiles". This spring however I put the question again to Barthou, who, after consulting his Cabinet, let me know through my French Colleague that the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and War were conjointly empowered without further consultation of the Cabinet to send in adequate forces of troops on our demand.' Cf. No. 77, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 128, note 2.

I answered:

- (1) That rapidity of action was the soul of the question and that it appeared to me essential that the two Ministries concerned should have the power to act without further reference to the Cabinet.
- (2) That action thus restricted seemed to me useless whether the troops were to intervene as mandatory of the League or in protection of French lives and property—incidentally the whole of the unsupported French Custom cordon and many of their mining engineers living in isolation are stationed East of the Saar. Intervention to be effective must cover the whole of the Territory.
- (3) To attempt to secure a declaration of this sort from the Council would be 'intempestif' and would only complicate the situation. I would try myself to obtain the insertion in Aloisi's report of a discreet reference to our right to appeal for outside help.

Barthou answered that he was in complete agreement with me on all points. He would try immediately to secure from the Cabinet full powers for the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and War to take the necessary action with the assent of the Président du Conseil, and he would impress on the Military Authorities that they must be fully prepared for rapid action on an adequate scale. I told him that as soon as a Cabinet decision had been reached I would ask my French Colleague to settle with the French Military Authorities those technical points on which a close understanding between us would be necessary.

I understand privately that the present position is that the Cabinet has not yet reached a decision. The stumbling block—and it is a grave one—is that October is the moment of incorporation of a large part of the annual class: military life is thus mainly confined for the next three or four months to barrack square instruction and, even in this frontier force, for such a period efficiency is at a very low ebb. I will, of course, continue to make every effort to reach a satisfactory cut and dried programme. For His Majesty's Government's intervention I am particularly grateful.

How things will go with us in the next few months is veiled in the obscurity of the German situation, an obscurity which I cannot in the least penetrate even with the help of those so well placed to see as Schussnig [*sic*] and Benes. So far as one can guess the possibilities of trouble are three:

- (1) If the German Government weakens and discipline relaxes.
- (2) If the opposition in the Saar reveals itself to be very strong the German Government might, rather than face a vote which could only be interpreted as one against Nazism, seek to postpone the plebiscite indefinitely by bringing about a French occupation.
- (3) An upheaval when the result of the vote is known, tending to put the Council before a fait accompli.

A fourth possibility which cannot be left out of account is that, if a serious political crisis came about in France, hot-heads might be tempted to jump

the claim. (There was something of a concentration of S.A. near our frontier before May 1st when a general strike was expected in France).

On the other side there is one factor which should be a useful prophylactic. The employment both by the Plebiscite Commission and in our police reinforcements of men of the most varied nationalities should, by extending indefinitely the risks of complications attendant on a 'Putsch', make even the most hardy conspirators reflect.

As to policy, I see only one: to keep public opinion reasonably alive to the possibilities of the situation and, on the least hint of trouble, not to fear to give it immediate publicity in advance.

For my police reinforcements, in addition to the replies already received I have now had favourable answers from Luxemburg, Holland and Czechoslovakia. The Norwegian Government are offering me serving police officers of whom I have already taken on one. Although my negotiations with them are not yet complete, I have reason to believe that the Netherlands Government will do the same. The British officers who have offered their services are not, I am afraid, up to the standard I want. They are mostly men who served in the Military Police in the Rhineland and Silesia, who then retired and have vegetated since. It would be invaluable if the War Office could let me have a couple of serving officers, first class interpreters in German. I well understand, of course, that there may be insuperable objections to this suggestion, but would be very grateful if you would consider it.

Yours ever

GEOFFREY KNOX

No. 139

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 18)*

*No. 199 [R 5758/37/3]*

VIENNA, October 16, 1934

Sir,

The first attempt to re-establish some degree of co-operation between the present Government and the Pan-Germans of Austria has, to all outward appearances, come to naught.

2. Some weeks ago the Chancellor established connection with a former Landbund<sup>1</sup> leader of the name of Rheinthal, who had undoubtedly been put forward by the responsible directors of the Pan-German movement in Austria, to see how far the Government was prepared to go.

3. Negotiations seemed for a time to be going surprisingly well; Herr Rheinthal actually reaching the point of furnishing the Chancellor at the latter's request with a Memorandum in which the Pan-Germans acknow-

<sup>1</sup> Farmers' party.

ledged their willingness to work for an independent Germanic Austria, as an integral part of the Patriotic Front, with leaders agreeable to the Government and rights which would have made of them an organisation in many ways similar to the present political wings of that body. From Pan-German sources I learn that the Chancellor had also allowed Herr Rheinthaler to set up an organisation throughout the country for consulting those of his way of thinking and ensuring—so far as he could—their consent to his proposals.

4. But the news of these negotiations soon leaked out, Heimwehr circles unfriendly to the idea of any compromise with the Pan-Germans being suspected of the leakage. As a result the Chancellor drew in his horns, the Head of the Press Section of the Department for Foreign Affairs was given a free rein and yesterday the Director of Propaganda, Colonel Adam, came out with an official statement which allows Herr Rheinthaler no following and leaves his fellows no opportunity other than blind renunciation of their faith and acceptance of a Catholic, authoritarian form of 'Germanic' Government. If to this clear obituary notice be added the private intimation given to Herr Rheinthaler by the chief of police that his recently formed organisation must be considered as illegal, it will be seen that Pan-Germanism has—to all outward appearances—received a severe rebuff, although in Austria this need not be considered as the Chancellor's last word.

5. Once more, therefore, the Heimwehr has been able to force its will upon the Chancellor. At the same time clerical circles still hanker after a Catholic State, with Austria as its centre and including South Germany, Croatia and other Roman Catholic lands in its orbit. With this idea Dr. von Schuschnigg—himself a devout Catholic—is reported, confidentially but on good authority, to be toying 'in the event of the probable disappearance of Herr Hitler from the German stage'; and the murder of King Alexander of Yugoslavia<sup>2</sup> has focussed interest in Austrian Catholic circles upon the future of Croatia.

6. Pan-German circles are disconcerted and angry; and mutterings reach me of a recommencement of terrorist activities 'if the Government is not prepared to treat'. These need not, perhaps, be taken too tragically for the moment as the risks to their perpetrators are vastly greater than was the case six months ago. But Colonel Adam's assurance that there had been and were no Cabinet dissensions or jealousies, no question of rivalry between Major Fey and Prince Starhemberg, no feeling between that leader and the Chancellor, and no question of Cabinet resignations, does much to fill men's minds with doubts.

7. I learnt on unimpeachable authority some days ago that the Minister of Commerce, Herr Stockinger, was only with difficulty saved—as a result of some financial scandal—from having to resign, and that the Minister of Finance, Dr. Buresch, is unhappy at the endless demands made upon the Treasury by the Heimwehr and Ostmärkische Sturmscharen, by Prince Starhemberg's support of Herr Mandl's<sup>3</sup> many schemes for enriching himself

<sup>2</sup> See No. 137, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Herr Fritz Mandl, general manager of the Hirtenberg ammunition factory, had given considerable financial support to the Heimwehr.

by increasing the armament of the military and semi-military formations, and by political 'relief works', which are going far to render any increase in revenue of no avail.

8. The Italian Legation, while professing satisfaction at the political situation, admits its anxiety over the 'deterioration of the economic state' of this country, and Dr. Schüller,<sup>4</sup> of the Department for Foreign Affairs, has gone to Paris, with a private Italian blessing, to extract what economic advantages he can from the French Government in the form of unilateral preferences and simplification of the regulations by which former preferences granted to Austria by France have been rendered unfruitful.

9. Thunder from the Left reaches Austria daily from exiled Socialist leaders in Czechoslovakia, and circles friendly to the Government admit that the Socialist working population shows no appreciable change of heart even though it is forced, in order to live, to join the Patriotic Front.

10. The coming months will not, therefore, be altogether comfortable for this Government, and it may be asked whether Italy—which is certainly calling the tune which the Austrian Government pipes to-day—would not be wise to seize the present psychological moment, at which Germany must be depressed by the reports which Herr von Papen bore to Berlin yesterday,<sup>5</sup> to obtain from the German Government a recognition of Austrian independence which might take the form of a non-aggression pact valid at least for ten years, in return for mutual economic concessions.<sup>6</sup>

11. I am sending copies of this despatch to His Majesty's representatives at Berlin, Rome and Belgrade.

I have, &c.,  
W. SELBY

<sup>4</sup> Dr. R. Schüller was Head of the Commercial Section of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>5</sup> Herr von Papen had returned to Berlin from Vienna on October 15.

<sup>6</sup> In the course of a letter to Mr. Sargent of October 31 dissenting from Sir Walford Selby's argument in paragraph 10, Sir E. Drummond wrote: 'I fear in fact, that at the present time, and in what I understand to be the existing temper of Germany, an arrangement of this nature would inevitably tend to divide Europe into two armed camps with all the perilous results that must necessarily ensue.' A minute of November 8 by Mr. R. A. Gallop, a member of the Southern Department of the Foreign Office, attached to this letter said: 'Sir W. Selby's "solution" of the Austrian question is one of which we have time and again demonstrated to him the complete impracticability as long as Germany is in her present mood.'



**No. 140**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 331 Telegraphic [R 5701/1608/22]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 17, 1934*

Your telegram No. 319<sup>1</sup> (of October 16: Italo-Austrian relations).

It is satisfactory that Signor Mussolini has assured you that Italy will not conclude a political agreement about Austria with third parties without prior consultation with France and ourselves.

My telegram to Geneva, No. 90 L.N.<sup>2</sup> (of September 26) however raises a further point, and my telegram to you, No. 303<sup>3</sup> (of September 26) requests you to mention to Signor Mussolini rumours of possible bilateral agreement between Italy and Austria and to deprecate, for reasons which are obvious, any such isolated action on Italy's part.

Perhaps this point was covered in your recent conversation, but I should be glad to know that it was and anyhow to receive an explicit assurance from Italian Government that no negotiations for a bilateral agreement would be entered upon without prior consultation.<sup>4</sup>

You will have noticed from paragraph 2 of my despatch No. 878<sup>5</sup> of October 9 that in my recent interview with Signor Grandi I covered the point by saying that the joint declaration of February recently confirmed at Geneva implied that none of us would take isolated action without previous consultation.

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram, not printed, Sir E. Drummond reported a conversation with Signor Mussolini on October 15 relating to Austria and Germany. In paragraph 2 he said: 'I remarked that I was particularly happy that it had been found possible to reach agreement about Austria at Geneva. I felt sure that he would have understood why my Government could not go any further. He said that he did and accepted the position. But I added that a common policy implied exchange of views should anything threaten Austrian independence and I assumed that none of us would conclude political agreements about Austria with third parties without consultation. Signor Mussolini confirmed this interpretation.'

<sup>2</sup> No. 115.

<sup>3</sup> No. 117.

<sup>4</sup> In his telegram No. 320 of October 18 to the Foreign Office Sir E. Drummond said: 'Personally I feel convinced that the point was both understood and covered in my recent conversation with Signor Mussolini. But to clear up any possible misunderstanding I will endeavour to obtain written confirmation from the Italian Government.'

<sup>5</sup> No. 135.

**No. 141**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 1171 [C 6923/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 18, 1934*

Sir,

Herr von Hoesch<sup>1</sup> spoke to me to-day about the present position of the Saar problem. He observed that the earlier French view, held for example by

<sup>1</sup> German Ambassador at London.

M. Briand,<sup>2</sup> was that when the plebiscite came to be taken the Saar would undoubtedly revert to Germany and that France should be prepared to acquiesce in that result. Recently, however, the French Government had changed their outlook and had resolved to work for a continuance of the *status quo* under the League of Nations. The recent French memorandum<sup>3</sup> on this subject was a most ingenious document, in which the ability of the Quai d'Orsay was shown to great advantage; it aimed at dangling before the eyes of the Saarlanders before the plebiscite was taken the prospect that if they voted for a continuance of the *status quo* this would not involve a final perpetuation of the present *régime* but that there might be a second plebiscite later on when they might change their minds. There was nothing about this in the Treaty of Versailles, and the hypothetical framework in which the French wanted the vote to be taken was, in the German view, opposed to the Treaty, and Germany would, if necessary, have to say so.

2. I told Herr von Hoesch that I should like him to understand exactly how the matter stood as far as we were concerned. The Council of the League was charged with a difficult and responsible duty, viz., that of carrying through the plebiscite in the Saar. We, as a member of the Council, had a share in this responsibility, and we should do our utmost to discharge it without fear or favour. Our business was not with the result of the plebiscite but with securing that the plebiscite was fairly taken under conditions which would make the result of the voting a real index of Saar opinion. We had expressed no opinion and reach no conclusion on the French memorandum. There was going to be a special meeting of the Council next month to consider the Saar question, but in the meantime he might take it that we had not entered into any understanding in relation to the French memorandum. I added that, as at present advised, I did not think it followed from the terms of the Treaty that a vote in favour of the continuance of the *status quo* necessarily meant that the present constitution of the Saar would continue *in sæcula sæculorum*. Eternity was a long time and, if there was a decision in favour of the *status quo*, this would not seem to me to rivet existing arrangements upon the area for ever. But it was quite true that there was nothing in the Treaty expressly about this and, as I had said, our only concern was to play our part in securing as well as we could that the plebiscite was carried through under conditions which were fair to everybody.

3. In this connexion, I observed that while he spoke of the efforts made by the French to influence the result in advance, we had before us reports which indicated that German influence was being extensively used to press the Saarlanders to opt for Germany. Moreover, there had sometimes been attacks from the German side upon Mr. Knox, which I was sure he did not deserve and which only made matters more difficult. Mr. Knox was a servant of the League of Nations and as such was discharging his difficult task as well as he could. As the Ambassador knew, we made it a rule not to treat British

<sup>2</sup> M. Briand, former French President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs, had died on March 7, 1932.

<sup>3</sup> Of August 31; cf. No. 75, note 16.

diplomats who for the time being were engaged in work for the League of Nations as having any special relations with the British Foreign Office—this had always been our practice when Sir Eric Drummond was Secretary-General<sup>4</sup>—and for this reason I had had no special conferences with Mr. Knox at Geneva. Mr. Eden had seen him on his administrative difficulties, but that was all. It would therefore be very regrettable if Mr. Knox's task were rendered more difficult by attacks from the German side.

4. Herr von Hoesch said that when there was a plebiscite impending upon which the future allegiance of a great area depended it was inevitable that there should be propaganda. The new German State was exposed to much criticism from outside, and the supporters of the new *régime* were bound to do their best to make Germans now living inside the Saar area understand the attitude of the Fatherland to which they were invited to return. The Ambassador said that he quite understood the impartial attitude which we took up and was well satisfied with it. His object had been to inform me of the view which his Government took of the French document, and he was glad to know that we had not committed ourselves to it.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>4</sup> 1919-33.

#### No. 142

*Letter from Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Mr. Sargent*  
[C 7058/74/18]

PARIS, October 18, 1934

My dear Sargent,

My letter of October 12th<sup>1</sup> about the preparations for the entry, in case of need, of French troops into the Saar.

Since his return from leave Heywood has also mentioned the matter to one of the Sub-Chiefs of the General Staff who told him that they were working out certain plans but that the difficulty was that without governmental authority the General Staff could not instruct the General Officer Commanding at Nancy, on whom the operation would devolve, to take all the preparatory measures incidental to an *immediate* movement of troops. It was doubtful whether the government would give the necessary authority unless the Council of the League definitely informed Knox that he was authorised to call in case of need on *French* troops, as being the nearest available, and formally notified the French government that it had done so. It would also be well if, in the event of the Council so acting, it were to request the French government to empower the officer commanding on the spot to respond to a call from Knox without further reference to headquarters.

The difficulty is that the French government will not themselves take the necessary action vis-à-vis the Council. The last thing they want is to give the

<sup>1</sup> No. 137.

Left elements in the country the handle to accuse them of embarking on a military adventure—comparisons with the Ruhr,<sup>2</sup> etc. They will therefore not take any initiative, though no doubt they would respond to anything in the nature of a summons from the League of Nations. That is a thing which they could defend to their own public. General Loiseau also told Heywood that the French would probably ask at Geneva, that if they are to provide the troops, other countries should send a military representative in order to show the international character of the operation. He specifically mentioned Great Britain and Italy.

I do not know whether His Majesty's Government would be prepared to set the ball rolling in that sense at the Council meeting next month.<sup>3</sup> Alternatively, Knox would probably be prepared to do it himself?

To pass to another but cognate matter, we know, through Heywood, that Knox is very far from satisfied with the type of English volunteer which is joining the plebiscite police force. They are not of the kind which is likely either to be efficient or to do us credit. Now that the Norwegian government (and others show signs of following suit) are authorising their serving army officers to volunteer (under, I take it, some system of selection), could we not do the same?<sup>4</sup> If we are going to have anything to do with it at all (i.e. in the shape of volunteers) surely we should do so in the most creditable way possible?

Heywood is writing in much that sense to the War Office, but they may be unwilling to move except on a request from the Foreign Office.

Yours ever,  
RONNIE CAMPBELL

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the occupation of the Ruhr Basin by French and Belgian troops in January 1923 owing to the non-fulfilment by the German Government of their obligations under the Treaty of Versailles.

<sup>3</sup> In a further letter of October 23 to Mr. Sargent Mr. Campbell asked: 'Will you let me know whether you see your way to work for that [decision of the Council] or, if not, whether you wish us to go on plugging away here? We would rather not do anything more immediately as it might only irritate, but we can a little later bring our batteries into action again if necessary . . .'

<sup>4</sup> The paragraph down to this point is scored in the margin with the comment: 'This is already being dealt with. O.G.S.' Cf. No. 138.

## No. 143

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 19, 3.20 p.m.)*  
*No. 321 Telegraphic [R 5826/37/3]*

*Personal*

ROME, October 19, 1934, 1.50 p.m.

My telegram No. 320.<sup>1</sup>

I am somewhat troubled by instruction to obtain explicit assurance from Italian Government that no negotiations for a bilateral agreement would be

<sup>1</sup> See No. 140, note 4.

entered into without prior consultation. While I feel sure that I shall obtain Italian Government's assurance that the term 'third parties', see second paragraph of my telegram No. 319,<sup>2</sup> included Austria, an assurance that no negotiations would be entered on may be difficult to obtain. Italians may feel that it would unduly cramp their style in future conversations with Austrian Chancellor<sup>3</sup> and also consider that such demand was an extension of declaration of September 27th.<sup>4</sup>

I think it would be unwise to attempt to tie cord too tight or give Italy opportunity of reopening conversations on Austrian problem particularly as Signor Suvich objected in conversation with Sir R. Vansittart,<sup>5</sup> though not pressing the point, to the desire of<sup>6</sup> a further guarantee to Austria. If in fact we ask for something beyond September declaration Italian Government may take occasion to ask for something more in their turn. I should therefore much prefer and trust you will agree (to) try<sup>7</sup> to obtain written assurance that Austria was covered by phrase 'any third party' and to express your hope that no negotiations with any third power even Austria would be entered into without prior consultation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.*, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. von Schuschnigg was to visit Italy from November 16–20 and have formal conversations with Signor Mussolini on November 17.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 124, note 1.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Robert and Lady Vansittart were on holiday in Rome. In a letter of October 19 to Sir J. Simon (F.O. 800/289), Sir E. Drummond wrote: 'Suvich gave a huge and joyous luncheon to-day in honour of the Vansittarts. . . . It has been great fun having Van here. The Italians expected a somewhat severe and very official personage under the title of Permanent Under-Secretary of State, and were correspondingly frightened. Now they have fallen under the charms of the Vans and all Rome is at their feet.'

<sup>6</sup> This phrase was queried on the filed copy of this telegram.

<sup>7</sup> It was suggested on the filed copy of this telegram that the text here should read: 'agree that I should try'.

<sup>8</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 333 of October 19 to Sir E. Drummond stated that the course suggested in the last sentence of telegram No. 321 above would in the circumstances meet the case.

## No. 144

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 26)*

*No. 1259 [C 7124/20/18]*

BERLIN, October 19, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 1142<sup>1</sup> of October 9th, requesting my observations on Mr. Poliakov's statement that the Quai d'Orsay expect the German Government to denounce Part V of the Treaty of Versailles formally in the near future.

2. I may say at the outset that I have never to my recollection expressed the opinion that the formal denunciation of Part V of the treaty is imminent.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 134, note 5.

I have in fact no reason to suppose that this is the case. I may, however, have said, and this is in the nature of a truism, that the Reichswehr would doubtless be pleased to see their position regularised.

3. The situation to-day is that the expansion of the Reichswehr is proceeding apace, a fact which is known to every well-informed German and foreign resident here. The violation of the Belgian treaty of neutrality in 1914 brought such unpleasant consequences in its train that the Germans regard treaties more seriously than is sometimes thought abroad. To denounce Part V of the Peace Treaty without knowing how the other signatories will react probably seems risky to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and I can well imagine that they are busy turning the question over in their minds.

4. The Military Attaché to this Embassy does not believe that the Reichswehr are bringing pressure on the Government to denounce Part V. They might, he considers, have been tempted to do so under a Social-Democratic Government, but the present régime has been able to draw a thick veil of secrecy over all military activities. The training areas, from which the public can be entirely excluded, have much increased in numbers, with the result that there should now be little difficulty in carrying out training with prohibited arms and formations. From remarks dropped to himself and his foreign colleagues the Military Attaché is not disposed to credit Mr. Poliakoff's story, and he has formed the impression that the German Government is reluctant to cause avoidable international complications at the moment. According to the French Military Attaché the Germans have not finally abandoned all hope of a convention, and continue to make advances to the French which are always rejected. In the absence of any agreement it seems possible that matters may be brought to a head by the expansion of the air force, which unlike tanks and guns, it is impossible to conceal.

5. As regards the part said to have been played by the United States Government, I am informed by the American Ambassador that the United States Embassy here has not delivered any warning in regard to German re-armament and has no information showing that any such warning has been given at Washington. The report, the United States Embassy considers, may be connected with a statement issued by Mr. Hull to the press about September 18th in which he cited a letter dated September 11th, explaining that the supply of military aircraft from the United States of America to Germany would be strongly disapproved. In the course of this letter mention was made of the rights of the United States Government under their separate treaty,<sup>2</sup> including Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, note 4.

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 20, 4 p.m.)*

*No. 285 Saving: Telegraphic [R 5820/37/3]*

PARIS, October 20, 1934

My telegram No. 283 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

General impression gained from the interview was that, although the French Government have decided to continue policy developed by Monsieur Barthou, they have not yet had time to take fresh bearings and see exactly where they stand. Monsieur Léger was in general much less informative than usual.

2. Asked what he thought of Dr. Benes' idea of reverting to the scheme for a general convention relating to Austria (see my telegram No. 278 Saving)<sup>2</sup> he was at a loss for an answer. It is difficult to say at present whether this was because Ministry for Foreign Affairs have had insufficient time in which to form an opinion or because, whilst in favour of the idea, the task of working out its details and implications is not sufficiently advanced for them to be ready to show their hand.

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram of October 20, not printed, Sir G. Clerk reported that M. Léger, the Secretary-General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had told him that M. Laval, who had been appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs after the assassination of M. Barthou (cf. No. 137, note 4), had just sent a message to Signor Mussolini saying that he would be 'pleased to pay the visit to Rome projected by M. Barthou as soon as the ground has been properly prepared'.

<sup>2</sup> In this telegram of October 16, not printed, Sir G. Clerk had outlined Dr. Benes's views, as expressed to him in a conversation that day, on the situation created by the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and M. Barthou. He reported Dr. Benes as saying that 'if things were allowed to drift, war might come within the next eighteen months' but that 'as a result of the assassinations the atmosphere was more propitious than it had been or might again become. There was a chance now, which must not be lost, of getting the situation under control.' Dr. Benes had strongly advised M. Doumergue, French President of the Council since February 1934, and M. Laval to continue the general line of policy sketched out by M. Barthou and considered that in Yugoslavia the process of consolidation would probably be accelerated. In Dr. Benes's opinion, however, the first and most pressing need 'was to dispose once and for all of the Austrian question. The recent renewal of the declaration of February 17th was an inadequate deterrent to Germany. He had advised M. Laval to persevere with the plan for a convention, containing a declaration regarding the independence of Austria and a repudiation of interference in the internal affairs of the other parties, to be signed not only by the Great Powers, but by the Central European Powers (he was vague as to which) on a footing of complete equality. He realised that Great Britain could not participate and all he asked for was her benediction. The sanctions provided for under such a convention should be applied only with the approval and at the bidding of the Council of the League of Nations. Though he admitted that Baron Aloisi had made it clear last month that Italy would accept no settlement which involved the League, he thought that Signor Mussolini might now be more pliable.'

No. 146

*Sir N. Henderson (Belgrade) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 21, 2.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 55 Telegraphic [R 5823/30/92]*

BELGRADE, October 21, 1934, 1 p.m.

Your telegram No. 50.<sup>1</sup>

References in your speech at Northampton to Yugoslavia have made profound impression here. All the papers reproduce extracts on leading pages and one prints sentence regarding 'strong united and prosperous Yugoslavia etc' in block letters across the first page.

I am convinced that your language will do more than anything else to steady the people in this country.

Not in my opinion an entirely welcome coincidence is that on the same day appeared statement to the press here by Goering to the effect that 'it is to the interest of Germany both as regards her own peace as well as for maintenance of peace in the whole of Europe that strong and powerful Yugoslavia should exist'.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of October 20, not printed, contained extracts from a speech on the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia made by Sir J. Simon at Northampton on October 19; see *The Times*, October 20, p. 14.

No. 147

*Sir N. Henderson (Belgrade) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 1)*  
*No. 180 [R 6068/30/92]*

BELGRADE, October 22, 1934

Sir,

I have received by bag copy of Sir G. Clerk's telegram No. 278 Saving<sup>1</sup> recording his conversation with Dr. Benes in Paris in regard to the situation created by the assassination of King Alexander.<sup>2</sup>

2. I agree with Dr. Benes that it is possible that the process of consolidation in Yugoslavia may be accelerated by King Alexander's death. There are many difficulties ahead and many chances that the wrong instead of the right turning may be taken, yet it is true that there are some favourable aspects of the situation as modified by the King's death.

3. In the first place, the Prince Regent has never been mixed up in party politics and he has, if he has the courage to use it, a free hand in this respect

<sup>1</sup> See No. 145, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> In his despatch No. 172 of October 13 Sir N. Henderson had written: 'I left Belgrade on the 8th instant, on leave of absence, and had barely reached my destination near Vienna the following evening, when His Majesty's Legation there telephoned to me the news of the dastardly assassination of King Alexander and M. Barthou at Marseilles . . . I got back to Belgrade in the early morning of the 11th instant and at once called on the Prime Minister to express to the Yugoslav Government the profound grief, horror and sympathy of The King, His Majesty's Government, the British people and myself.' Some further details as to British action in the crisis are given in Sir N. Henderson's volume of memoirs, *Water under the Bridges* (London, 1945), pp. 194-8.



which was lacking to the late King who found it extremely difficult to free himself from the chains of certain old connections. Generally speaking in fact it is to the new, and not the old, generation to which Yugoslavia must look for salvation.

4. Secondly, while His Royal Highness can never enjoy the same respect and prestige as King Alexander, he cannot but be more acceptable to the Croats who must recognise in him a man even more cultured than themselves. This culture question *vis-à-vis* the Serbs is one of the basic grievances of the Croats.<sup>3</sup>

5. Thirdly, the Prince Regent on account of his English education is regarded as representative of British ideas of honest and clean administration. A senior military officer, for instance, told the Military Attaché to this Legation that the Army favoured Prince Paul because they considered him to be the type of an English gentleman.

6. Fourthly, the death of King Alexander has united this country in grief as it has never been united before. Whatever the views held by Serb politicians or Croat intellectuals or Slovene Catholics, none doubted the devotion of the King to Yugoslavia as a whole nor, in fact, failed to recognise that he gave his life for his ideal of Yugoslavia. His alleged dying words 'Preserve Yugoslavia' will endure when everything else is forgotten. It has been, not inaptly, suggested that they should form the Yugoslav equivalent of 'Heil, Hitler'. It is worth here recording that on the archway at Oplenac, through which the coffin had to pass on its last stage from the railway station to the mausoleum at Topola, the following words were inscribed: 'Sleep in peace: we will preserve Yugoslavia'. This keynote, struck by the local mayor himself, in the heart of the old Serb country, where the first Karageorgević raised his standard of revolt against the Turks,<sup>4</sup> is symbolical and significant. One of the late King's hardest tasks was to convince not the Croat but the old Serb peasant that the new Kingdom must be Yugoslav and not Serb. The union will henceforward mean something which must at all cost be preserved because King Alexander, hero and martyr, wished it. In a sense, therefore, Yugoslavia has been consecrated by his death, and civil war no less bloody than in the United States would ensue if any internal effort were made to dissolve it. Nor, without foreign support, would it end otherwise than in America.

7. Far too much stress is laid abroad on the Croat danger and far too much attention paid to the grievances, some genuine, but many greatly exaggerated, of the Croat intellectual and politician. Police rule is excessively strict in Zagreb but it is the Croats themselves who render it necessary and it is

<sup>3</sup> In the above-mentioned despatch Sir N. Henderson had written: 'He [the Prince Regent] has never enjoyed anything but very indifferent health and as a ruler he is a completely unknown quantity. He is apt to act precipitately on imperfect knowledge and I seriously fear his impetuosity in this respect. He will appeal to the professedly more cultured Croats and may well get more support from the other branches of the Yugoslav race than from the Serbs, who were unable to resist the much stronger personality of King Alexander and the extraordinary charm which the latter possessed whenever he wished or was in the mood to exercise it.'

<sup>4</sup> In 1804-13.

difficult after Marseilles to deny the necessity. If one result of the assassination is the extirpation of the Pavelić-Perčec band and brand of Croat terrorists living over the frontiers,<sup>5</sup> it may prove a boon for Croatia itself. It was difficult for the Serb to feel kindly disposed to the Croat or to welcome his appointment to the higher posts in the Army or the civil service so long as such an organisation was in being. The Serb has many vices but the wrongs are not all on his side in this quarrel for predominance between the Croat and himself. The most justifiable grievances are the centralisation at Belgrade and the inefficiency and dishonesty of the administration. But they are grievances common to the whole country. The modification of the former has long been contemplated and the improvement of the latter can only come gradually and by experience. What Yugoslavia needs more than anything else is the building up of tradition, and for this generations are necessary.

8. The Prince Regent has to some extent in these respects a clean slate. King Alexander's death is a breaking with a past which, though militarily glorious, had little to recommend it administratively or politically. If he has the health of body and strength of mind to build constructively, His Royal Highness may render inestimable services to his country. He has the aforementioned elements in his favour, but he has also, particularly to begin with, vastly troublesome obstacles with which to contend.

I have, &c.,

NEVILLE HENDERSON

<sup>5</sup> The reference was to the revolutionary Croatian nationalist movement, the Ustasa, which was prepared to accept money and assistance from Italy and Hungary and which had been implicated in the death of King Alexander (cf. No. 137, note 4). See S. Graham, *Alexander of Yugoslavia* (London, 1938).

## No. 148

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 26)*

*No. 1265 [C 7125/74/18]*

BERLIN, October 23, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to report that with the gradual approach of the date of the plebiscite, the German press is giving more prominence to events in the Saar territory. Any decisions of the Governing Commission disagreeable to Germany, such for example as the prohibition of the work of the 'Winterhilfe',<sup>1</sup> are prominently reported and attacked. Indeed the official at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in charge of the Western European section of the Press Department told a member of my staff that his time was almost entirely taken up in issuing instructions to the press regarding the reporting of events

<sup>1</sup> A fund established by the Nazis early in 1934 ostensibly for relieving hardship during cold weather.

in the Saar, and the line to be taken in editorials. He drew particular attention to a leading article in the 'Börsen Zeitung' of October 21st, which he said had been directly inspired by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

2. The article referred to appears under the title 'Trustee or Party' and argues that the Separatists are slowly pushing the League of Nations into an untenable position, by representing themselves as loyal adherents of the League, fighting to secure a League triumph in the plebiscite. It was not the task of the Governing Commission to allow the League to enter the lists as a third Party. In that event the League could no longer act as an impartial trustee in a matter which must only be decided between Germany and France. If the League desired to become a third claimant to the Saar territory, it should withdraw and give place to a real disinterested trustee. Max Braun,<sup>2</sup> whose cordial relations with the Governing Commission was a heavy reproach to the latter, had declared at a recent meeting that the Marxists had offered the League 'several thousand men loyal to the League'. He had thus let the cat out of the bag. The same line had been taken in the 'Petit Parisien' which had naively complained of the inadequate resources of the League's supporters and asked 'Why can one not decide to send the money and the men into the Saar territory, which are necessary for the organisation of the plebiscite, in which the prestige of the League stands opposed to that of Hitler?' It was difficult, the article continued, to believe one's eyes and ears. 'Supporters of the League', 'prestige of the League' were spoken of, and French money and men were to be sent into the Saar territory to organise a solution in favour of the League! One could no longer remain silent, and one must ask whether the League of Nations had agreed to be represented as the third party in the plebiscite battle. If so, it could no longer be an impartial trustee. If not, it must put an end to this falsification of the issue of the plebiscite. The responsibility of the League was rendered greater by the Marseilles assassination,<sup>3</sup> since it was placing the Saar territory at the free disposal of communists and emigrants. Was the League to sit toasting comradeship with these emigrants, and allow itself to be put up by them as a candidate at the plebiscite?

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>2</sup> Editor of the *Volksstimme*, a German Socialist paper.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 137, note 4.

*Mr. Campbell<sup>1</sup> (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 25)*  
*No. 1648 [C 7088/20/18]*

PARIS, October 24, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to draw your particular attention to an interesting despatch from Colonel T. G. G. Heywood, Military Attaché to this Embassy, copy of which is enclosed herewith, in which are recorded the views of the French General Staff regarding certain aspects of military and aerial re-armament in Germany.

I have, &c.,  
R. H. CAMPBELL

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 149  
*Colonel Heywood to Mr. Campbell*  
No. 726

*Secret*

PARIS, October 24, 1934

Sir,

I beg to report to you the following information which I have received from the French War Office in the course of recent conversations with General Gamelin, Chief of the General Staff, General Loizeau [*sic*], Sub-Chief of the Staff, and Colonel Koeltz, head of the Deuxième Bureau.

2. General Gamelin told me that they had just received some very interesting information regarding the developement [*sic*] of German air armaments which he thought was of great importance to us as well as to the French. He had therefore instructed General Loizeau to communicate this information to me; taken in conjunction with the information which is accumulating regarding the increase in German land armaments, the news was definitely disquieting.

3. As regards land armaments Germany has asked for an army of 300,000; it was now clear that the army Germany was preparing was not one of 300,000 men including the Reichswehr, but one of 300,000 short-service men in addition to the 100,000 long-service men of the Reichswehr who would be employed to form cadres. If one added to this that portion of the Police forces which was organised in units and kept in barracks and the number of Schutz-Staffel and Sturm-Abteilung men who were present on duty at any time, it meant that Germany would very shortly have at her disposal forces amounting to 600,000 men in peace time.

4. General Loizeau told me that they had obtained information in regard to the German Air Force '1935 programme' which was to be carried out by October 1st, 1936. It came from a very good source and many items had already been confirmed by independent sources; for instance, that work was

<sup>1</sup> In charge of H.M. Embassy during the absence on leave of Sir G. Clerk from October 20 to November 7.

going on in the preparation of aerodromes in many of the places mentioned in the programme. They had previously had the '1934 programme', which was to be ready by October 1st, 1935, from the same source and General Loizeau requested that this information should be kept most secret in order not to compromise this very valuable source.

5. General Loizeau then read out to me some information contained in a paper which had been prepared for Marshal Pétain. He pointed out that the new programme was remarkable not only for the great increase in aircraft involved, but for the distribution on the ground of the new air forces; he emphasized that he considered this information to be absolutely reliable; it was therefore of vital importance both to themselves and to us, that is why he had been instructed to communicate it to me.

6. In view of the defensive policy of our countries it was very important that any valuable information concerning the developement of German armaments should be known by us as soon as possible. Information received three months ahead might make all the difference to the preparation of counter-measures and defensive plans. He therefore begged that if and when we had any similar information regarding the developement of German armaments we should let them know as early as possible. He added that Colonel Koeltz (who was present throughout this interview) would give me any additional details I required.

7. I have seen Colonel Koeltz again since; he showed me a distribution map of the German Air Force which they had prepared on the basis of this programme and gave me further details; he also showed me a list of aerodromes and grounds reported to be in course of preparation and several of the reports they had had concerning work at these different places.

8. As regards the German Army, the organisation of twenty-one Divisions was complete; there was activity in the construction of new barracks as well as in the reappropriation of old surplus barracks which had been alienated. He thought that the Germans were only waiting for the Saar plebiscite to be over to bring out their Army in the open.

9. The information regarding the '1935 programme' of the German Air Force given me by General Loizeau and Colonel Koeltz is given in Appendix A.<sup>2</sup> Colonel Koeltz, at my request, has also sent me a copy of the list of aerodromes and grounds reported to be in course of preparation which is reproduced in Appendix B.<sup>2</sup>

10. An interesting feature of this programme is, that, as far as I can judge, it does not appear to be exaggerated; the provision of an air fleet of 500 machines by October 1935 and its increase by another 800 machines by October 1936 seems to be within the possibilities of construction of the German air industry, assisted, if necessary, by purchases outside Germany.<sup>3</sup>

I have, &c.,

T. G. G. HEYWOOD

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

<sup>3</sup> In a minute of October 26 on this despatch Mr. Wigram wrote: '1. The report that Germany is working for a short-service army of 300,000 *plus* the Reichswehr is new: the War

Office have not so far had this information: but everyone is agreed that Germany is working towards an army of offensive strength. 2. We knew already that the Germans would probably have 500 machines in the first line by the autumn of 1935; that this force will be doubled by the autumn of '36 is new information; the Air Ministry are checking this, and will express no opinion for the moment. But we have for some months been calculating on a greatly increased German air strength by 1938 or '39. . . . R. F. Wigram 26/10/34.'

## No. 150

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent<sup>1</sup>*

[C 7114/20/18]

BERLIN, October 24, 1934

My dear Sargent,

The Belgian Minister tells me that he was informed last week by a person in the confidence of Herr Hitler that the latter has in his entourage certain high members of the S.A. and even certain Generals of the Reichswehr, who are working for war in the near future. Count Kerchove's informant maintains that this 'war-party's' thesis was as follows:—After the assassination of Dr. Dollfuss when Signor Mussolini mobilised some of his troops on the Austrian frontier, Herr Hitler should not give way, and should allow the Austrian Legion to cross into Austria, in the hope that Signor Mussolini would then send troops there. The Germans would thereupon fly to the assistance of their Austrian brothers; they would then, in view of the light-hearted way in which the Italian forces were disposed, and of the fact that Yugoslavia would likewise have marched into Austria, have stood a good chance of encircling the Italian troops in a species of German-Yugoslav tweezers, à la Tannenberg.<sup>2</sup>

Herr Hitler, the informant declared, declined to listen to such suggestions, and in this course he was supported by General von Blomberg.

The idea of the war party apparently is that Hitler's repeated and prolonged efforts to obtain real peace having proved fruitless, it would have been advisable therefore to take advantage of the strained relations between Yugoslavia and Italy, which rendered Yugoslav co-operation with Germany highly probable if not certain. They feel an utter contempt, it seems, for the Italians and they think it would be well to strike before Great Britain has proceeded too far with her rearmament. Finally, last August anyhow, they thought that France would be placed in a position of cruel embarrassment if Yugoslavia ranged herself on the other side of the barricade.

I suggested to Kerchove that his informant had been sent to him by Hitler in order to impress upon him how reasonable that paragon was; but Kerchove would not hear of this, and declared he could vouch for the good faith of his man. Kerchove is inclined to think that Hitler is 'pondéré' and will not

<sup>1</sup> Filed in the Foreign Office on October 26.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the successful German tactics against the Russian army under General Samsonov at Tannenberg in East Prussia, August 26–30, 1914.

listen to these war-like counsellors in the future any more than he did last August; but I decline to invest him with that quality; he still remains for me the 'unbalanced being' I described in my account of our first interviews.<sup>3</sup> True, he may have the cunning of the Red Indian, and may well therefore resist all war-like advice until he be ready to the last man and the last button; but just as on the internal plane last June he saw red and shot wildly so, I fear, may he some day be quite capable of running amok on the more deadly external plane.

Opinions of course vary enormously as to when Germany will be ready for war.

The French Ambassador, who has received similar information as Count Kerchove though from another source, believes she is almost ready now; Count Kerchove does not think she will be ready for eight years. The Turkish Ambassador, after a good dinner, confided to me that his Military Attaché was terrified and thought the Germans were ready 'to the last sandwich'. He himself, however, did not take so black a view and had tried to calm the fears of his Military Attaché. Colonel Thorne tells me the latter is not an eagle and is apt to exaggerate.

Colonel Thorne and Major Hay<sup>4</sup> think that there may possibly be wild men with no military knowledge who have such designs. The plan smacks of Roehm's days.<sup>5</sup> But they do not believe that any Reichswehr General can be behind it.

The whole Reichswehr is in process of reorganisation, being transformed from 7 to 21 divisions. The new recruits are not trained. There could be no worse moment to undertake any military operation. Moreover this particular plan presents practical difficulties. They think the Germans could not mobilise more than 7 divisions.<sup>6</sup> These would have to be collected and entrained, some from a great distance. By the time they were assembled the Italians would have ample notice.

Five years is, in their opinion, the period required to reorganise the Reichswehr.

Yours ever,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Volume V, No. 489; Volume VI, No. 99.

<sup>4</sup> Respectively H.M. Military Attaché and Assistant Military Attaché at Berlin.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 120, paragraph 1.

<sup>6</sup> This statement was corrected in a letter of November 1 from Sir E. Phipps to Mr. Sargent which read: 'Thorne now tells me that the use of the word "mobilise" is inaccurate and does not represent his view. He meant that the Germans could not "despatch" more than seven divisions to Austria, since he was considering what could be done rapidly without a general mobilisation to meet the Italian forces at manoeuvre strength (Italy not having ordered a general mobilisation). Thorne thinks, and he believes that all the other Military Attachés agree with him, that, if necessary, Germany could mobilise at least 21 infantry divisions within a short time.'

No. 151

*Letter from Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Mr. Sargent<sup>1</sup>*

[C 7211/74/18]

PARIS, October 24, 1934

My dear Sargent,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter from Knox to Heywood which throws rather a different light on the Saar question about which we have been corresponding. We did not indeed know here of the conversation between Barthou and Knox. In view of what the latter now says, I take it that you will not favour the idea of a fresh Council decision. In that event we will, on hearing from you that you wish us to do so, take the question up again here after allowing a reasonable interval to elapse.

Yours ever,  
R. H. CAMPBELL

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 151

*Letter from Mr. Knox to Colonel Heywood*

*Confidential*

October 22, 1934

Dear Heywood,

Many thanks for your interesting and helpful letters of October 16th and 19th.<sup>2</sup>

It is rather disquieting for me to find that the French military Authorities shall [? still] stick to their idea of the Council making a formal request to the French Government to furnish troops in case of need. You will see from the enclosed copy of a letter of October 15th to Sargent<sup>3</sup> (which I would be grateful if, after showing to the Ambassador, you would ask the Chancery to keep for me with my other papers) what my view was on this point in September. It has not changed since then and I think it would be definitely unwise to try to get the Council to go further than Barthou's declaration of September 27th<sup>4</sup> which was surely explicit enough.

The position is that the Aloisi Committee is struggling to reach, with the greatest possible measure of Franco-German agreement, a settlement in a number of delicate problems affecting the plebiscite, for the Council sitting in November. On one, perhaps the most important, of these points—the definition of the 'Status quo'—it is unlikely in the extreme that any degree of Franco-German agreement can be reached, and by no means certain that even unanimity in the Council can be attained. (Saar questions can be decided by a majority, but no one would like to expose the Council to the strain of such a procedure). Thus the normal agenda for this special Council meeting will offer difficulties which will call for a quite unusual amount of

<sup>1</sup> Filed in the Foreign Office on October 30.

<sup>2</sup> These letters have not been traced in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>3</sup> No. 138.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 122.



good-will and mutual accommodation. If another question of this magnitude is thrown at them which may make a number of members reflect on the weightier responsibilities of the Council, it may well compromise the whole work of the Session and only intensify our difficulties here. Suppose, for instance, that it was proposed that the Council make a declaration of this sort, and that this suggestion was either whittled away to nothing, after the manner of the League, or dropped, the facts would be known to all Governments, and both the dangers of a 'Putsch' and the difficulties of prompt French intervention correspondingly increased.

Even if one could arrive at a declaration in satisfactory form one cannot leave out of account the inevitable reaction in the isolationist Conservative press at home—and, what is worse, it might well give birth to scruples in the more doctrinaire circles of the French Radical Socialists, and allow them to prepare a campaign of criticism, which would not come into play in the same way if the French Government were suddenly to be called upon to act as mandatory of the Representatives of the League in virtue of an existing resolution of the Council, the French acceptance of which was reaffirmed by their Minister for Foreign Affairs as recently as last month.

I did not go into details on this suggestion in my last conversation with Barthou. We both rejected it *ab initio*. Please do not think I am without understanding for the point of view of the French military authorities, particularly if their plans comprise calling up the 'réserve de couverture'; simply, I do not feel that it is practical politics. I hope that the civil side of the Cabinet will be able to insist on its being ruled out, and replace it, if necessary, by a judicious preparation of public opinion.

As to paragraph 4 of your minute,<sup>5</sup> I would naturally act directly with the French authorities, as the executive of the Governing Commission, in the event either of a stand-by warning or of an appeal for assistance. For preliminary discussion of the many points on which agreement is needed—particularly the methods of rapid communication with the French military authorities in all eventualities—I would far prefer to be represented by my French Colleague in whom I have complete confidence. Although two of the French Generals stationed in the neighbourhood are old acquaintances of mine, I have, for obvious reasons, avoided contact with them and it is on general grounds desirable that I should continue to do so.

To summarize what I would wish to see done:—

1. That the idea of a declaration by the Council be dropped.
2. That the Ministries immediately concerned, Foreign Affairs and War, be empowered immediately to act on a 'requisition' from us.

<sup>5</sup> In this minute of October 18, not printed, Colonel Heywood gave a slightly fuller version of his conversation the previous day with General Loiseau (cf. No. 142). In paragraph 4 he recorded General Loiseau as saying 'that at the meeting of the Council in November the League of Nations should definitely ask the French Government to be prepared to supply troops immediately on demand from the Saar Government' and as adding 'if this were done they would at once instruct General Jeanpierre, the General Officer commanding the 20th Army Corps at Nancy, to get into touch with Mr. Knox to make all the necessary arrangements'.

3. That the military plans for rapid intervention on an adequate scale be completed and the necessary contact with us established.

I would be very grateful if you would show this letter to the Ambassador and suggest that, if he has no objection, a copy be sent to Sargent.

**No. 152**

*Letter from Mr. Knox (Saarbrücken) to Mr. Sargent<sup>1</sup>*

[C 7203/74/18]

SAARBRÜKEN, October 25, 1934

Dear Sargent,

Many thanks for your letter of October 19th.<sup>2</sup>

I am most grateful for all the help you are giving. The War Office, at Heywood's request, had already sent out an officer, Capt. Garnon Williams of M.I., who is fully aware of our requirements and has already vetted some of our candidates. I am quite confident that he could continue to do so to our complete satisfaction, the more so as I must keep Hemsley and anyone else competent standing-by for countries where we will have no-one fully qualified to do the vetting for us. I am enclosing<sup>3</sup> a draft contract and any further details which may be of use to you for the information of candidates. I will try tomorrow to get my colleagues to give more concrete and satisfactory form to the present article which provides for compensation as an act of grace!

As to numbers, I have already taken on two British officers and am just awaiting final details of a third who seems exactly the type I want; two or three more would make up my complement for the moment but I would be very glad to have others on a waiting list. I am naturally anxious to give the thing as wide an international character as I can and I must first see what exactly I can get from other sources before I go beyond this instalment.

A serious hitch has now arisen. The financing of our police was to be done through a further contribution to the plebiscite fund by the French and German Governments. I now hear from Avenol<sup>4</sup> that no answer has been received from the two Governments to a request addressed to them in this sense, although I had gathered in September from Biancheri,<sup>5</sup> who is conducting these negotiations in Aloisi's name, that there was substantial agree-

<sup>1</sup> Filed in the Foreign Office on October 29.

<sup>2</sup> In this letter, sent in a registered private envelope to Mr. Knox's accommodation address in Metz, Mr. Sargent said that there would be considerable difficulty 'both of a service and general character' in supplying two serving British officers as requested in Mr. Knox's letter of October 15 (No. 138), but the Foreign Office believed that 'excellent retired officers' for the purpose could be found. Accordingly, the War Office was at once getting into touch with various ex-officer associations.

<sup>3</sup> Enclosures are not here reproduced.

<sup>4</sup> Secretary-General of the League of Nations.

<sup>5</sup> A reference presumably to M. Biancheri; see No. 96, note 2.

ment on the question. I fear, warned by past experience, that there is here some unsavoury 'combinazione' under way. It might perhaps be possible for H.M.G., acting as a member of the Council, to enquire of Aloisi how the question of financing the Saar plebiscite police is getting on.

Yours ever

GEOFFREY KNOX

## No. 153

### *Memorandum on Anglo-German debt and exchange negotiations<sup>1</sup>*

[C 7280/90/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 27, 1934

The following are the main provisions of the Anglo-German transfer agreement of July 4th, 1934,<sup>2</sup> which was to remain in force until the end of the year:—

(1) The payment by Germany in sterling of the interest on those portions of the Dawes and Young loans in *bona fide* British ownership on June 15th, 1934, and falling due in October and December;

(2) The conversion of the interest due during the last six months of 1934 on the other long-term German loans into funding bonds bearing interest at 3%, or the payment of cash on 40% of this interest, if the bondholders preferred either of these arrangements to the retention of their coupons, which would remain valid for payment at some future date; all this subject to most-favoured-nation treatment with regard to any subsequent German settlement with other creditor countries;

(3) The opening of negotiations for the conclusion of an exchange agreement to cover future trade between the two countries;

(4) The reservation of the question of the extension of the exchange agreement to the colonies;

(5) A British undertaking not to apply a clearing unilaterally during the period of the agreement.

2. The exchange agreement covering future trade was signed in Berlin on August 10th, 1934.<sup>3</sup> It provided for the opening at the Reichsbank of a special account on behalf of the Bank of England into which German importers would pay those reichsmarks due to certain British exporters holding a general exchange permit for which they could not obtain foreign exchange. The Bank of England would then sell these reichsmarks to United Kingdom importers who had payments in reichsmarks to make in Germany; and the sterling thus received would be paid to the United Kingdom exporters.

3. It will be noted that the exchange agreement dealt only with future trade and made no attempt to deal with the frozen debts accumulated in

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was prepared in the Central Department of the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 24, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 8.

respect of the past trade between the two countries. Owing to exchange difficulties and regulations in Germany the amount of these debts had been rapidly increasing since June.

4. On September 24th the German Government introduced a series of further restrictions on trade and regulations for the control of exchange. The result was to render the machinery of the exchange agreement of the previous month inapplicable. A few days earlier the German Government had proposed the opening of discussions in Berlin designed to find, in conformity with the new regulations, means for a permanent settlement of trade relations between the two countries.<sup>4</sup>

5. Sir F. Leith-Ross and a British delegation accordingly visited Berlin from September 18th to the 27th to discuss this question with the German authorities.<sup>5</sup> The only tangible result of this visit, which was exploratory in character, was a decision by the German authorities not to apply the latest exchange regulations, in so far as British trade was concerned, until the end of October or until the conclusion of a permanent settlement, whichever was the earlier.

6. Sir F. Leith-Ross then submitted a report<sup>6</sup> to the Cabinet, in which he recommended the establishment of a bilateral clearing arrangement such as that concluded by Germany with some 18 other countries. His recommendation, with which the Cabinet agreed, was that the negotiations which he was to return to Berlin to renew should aim at securing a limited clearing arrangement to cover future trade and frozen debts only. It was to be brought into force on November 1st and to be valid until the end of the year; and the German Government was to be left to assure the payment of interest on the Dawes and the Young loans and on the other long-term loans, as under the transfer agreement of July 4th, which was also valid until December 31st. The question whether, after the end of the year, it would be necessary to extend the clearing arrangement to cover the financial obligations was to be reserved for settlement until December. Sir F. Leith-Ross further recommended and the Cabinet approved that the question of the short-term loans covered by the standstill agreement should continue to be treated in such a manner as the British standstill creditors and the Reichsbank might agree to be best calculated to maintain the present position, provided that, so far as the standstill credits were concerned, no change could be accepted under the clearing, except possibly the interest due. The Cabinet further agreed that of the sterling received at the Clearing Office in respect of the payments due to Germany by United Kingdom importers, 55% should be earmarked for the discharge of the sums due to the United Kingdom exporters to Germany, 12% should be earmarked for the discharge of frozen commercial debts due to British exporters, while the remaining 33% should be at the free disposal of the Reichsbank, on the understanding that the Dawes and Young and other long-term obligations should be met out of it.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 83.

<sup>5</sup> See *Money Talks. The Autobiography of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross* (London, 1968), pp. 184-7.

<sup>6</sup> This report of September 28 was considered by the Cabinet on October 3.

7. The British Delegation resumed negotiations in Berlin in the middle of October. The Germans first pressed for a single account clearing system to be opened on behalf of the Reichsbank at the Bank of England; at first the Germans claimed that this account should be at the free disposal of the Reichsbank. Our Delegation asked for a double account; one at and under the control of the Bank of England into which the United Kingdom debtor to Germany would pay sterling, and the other at the Reichsbank into which the German debtor to this country would pay reichsmarks. Our Delegation pointed out to the Germans that it would be difficult to justify to public opinion in this country the establishment of a Clearing Office unless the Bank of England had control of the sums paid into it by United Kingdom debtors to Germany; but on October 24th the Cabinet approved the principle of a single account provided we had control of that part of the account out of which the United Kingdom claims were to be met.

8. Dr. Schacht had throughout been manœuvring by various means to avoid a clearing; and scarcely had the Cabinet approval been given to a single account clearing, than Sir F. Leith-Ross reported a scheme submitted by Dr. Ulrich,<sup>7</sup> one of the German officials, by which Dr. Schacht claimed that the British Government would obtain the security of a clearing system without its attendant disadvantages. A sterling credit was to be raised against the collateral of debts owing to Germany by this country (Dr. Schacht estimated these at £5,000,000). The frozen debt payments were to be liquidated out of this credit. Current or future trade was to be maintained on a basis satisfactory to us; and the United Kingdom exporter was to be paid by 55% of the sterling owed by the United Kingdom importer to the German exporter. A further 10% of that sterling would be used to liquidate such frozen debts as were not covered by the credit.

9. Opinion in London was at first against the acceptance of this proposal, which seemed to give us no security against fresh manœuvres and defaults by Dr. Schacht. But on October 26th there were two new developments:—

(1) The Governor of the Bank of England declared his readiness to make an immediate advance of £400,000 secured on the debts owing to Germany by this country: this advance to be used at once for the liquidation of part of the frozen debts. 55% of the remainder of the sterling owed by British importers to Germany would be used for the maintenance of current or future trade and the liquidation of the so-called 'sondermarks' or marks destined as payment for recent British imports into Germany, but held up under the new exchange regulations of September. Out of the remainder of this credit the frozen debts were to be completely liquidated.

(2) Sir F. Leith-Ross suggested that the single account clearing system approved by the Cabinet should be proceeded with and initialled by the British and German Delegations, though it should be held in suspense so long as Dr. Ulrich's scheme gave satisfaction. This has been made clear in the

<sup>7</sup> Deputy Director in the Economic Department of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

letter given to Dr. Schacht by Sir F. Leith-Ross this morning; (see F.O. telegram No. 207 to Berlin of October 26th);<sup>8</sup> and the agreement now to be concluded on the lines of the Ulrich proposal will actually contain a reference to the single account clearing agreement which the two Delegations will have initialled.

10. Sir F. Leith-Ross's letter to Dr. Schacht further asks him to confirm that the Dawes and Young loan arrangements of last summer remain in force and that the arrangement of last summer regarding the other long-term non-Reich loans also remain in force. Sir F. Leith-Ross had at first been inclined to stiffen this latter arrangement in view of a more favourable arrangement concluded between the Germans and Swiss,<sup>9</sup> but owing to the attitude of the Governor of the Bank of England it appears improbable that he will now continue to insist on this.

11. These arrangements have been approved by the President of the Board of Trade because he feels that if it is possible to get the results of a clearing without its disadvantages it is politic to do so. On the other hand, the criticism which had already been made in the Foreign Office that this was simply to follow the precedent of the other dealings with the Germans in this matter, which have always ended in our discomfiture, is met by the fact that the clearing arrangement is now actually initialled and can immediately be brought into force without further negotiations.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Not printed. In this telegram Sir F. Leith-Ross was informed that the Treasury and the Board of Trade accepted the proposals in Sir F. Leith-Ross's draft letter to Dr. Schacht. Berlin telegram No. 272 of October 27 containing a message from Sir F. Leith-Ross for the Treasury and the Board of Trade reported that the letter had been given to Dr. Schacht that morning and that copies (not traced in Foreign Office archives) would be sent by air mail. An English text of Sir F. Leith-Ross's letter of October 27 is printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 277.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. No. 125, note 6.

<sup>10</sup> An undated minute on the file by Mr. Sargent reads: 'This fact did not appear from the tels. exchanged bet[ween] Sir F. Leith-Ross and the Treasury. It was dealt with apparently by means of telephone conversations of which we have seen no records.'

## No. 154

### *Memorandum on German Debt Negotiations*<sup>1</sup>

[C 7281/90/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 30, 1934*

1. A memorandum will be circulated this evening to the Cabinet by the President of the Board of Trade, explaining the agreement regarding the German debts which it is hoped will be signed in Berlin to-morrow. So far, no more than a preliminary draft of this memorandum has been seen by the Department; but for the information of the Secretary of State, the position is very shortly summarised below.

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was prepared in the Central Department of the Foreign Office.

2. The agreement to be signed to-morrow will contain the following provisions:—

(1) 55% of the sterling due by British importers against German exports to this country will be set aside by the Reichsbank for the payment of future United Kingdom exports to Germany.

(2) The frozen debts which have accumulated in recent months in respect of British exporters to Germany will be met out of a credit to be raised by the German Government. The Bank of England will immediately advance to the Reichsbank a sum of £400,000 on account of this credit; this advance will be secured against the collateral of certain sterling payments due to Germany. Further, until the whole of these frozen debts are cleared off, 10% will be earmarked for their payment out of the sterling due to German exporters on account of their exports to this country.

(3) The standstill agreement covering the short-term credits will be maintained.

(4) The German Government will undertake to continue the service of the Dawes and Young loans, apparently pending the duration of the present agreement.

(5) The British holders of long-term loans other than the Dawes and Young loans will, until June 30th, 1936, waive their claim to be accorded similar treatment to that given to Swiss holders under the recent German-Swiss agreement and any similar claim, should more favourable agreements be concluded with bondholders of other nationalities. In return the interest accorded them under the agreement of last summer will be raised from 3 to 4 per cent; these terms will apparently continue to be accorded for the duration of the present agreement.

(6) Annexed to the new agreement will be an agreed clearing arrangement between the British and German Governments, which will immediately come into force in the event of the breakdown of the present agreement.

(7) This agreement is to continue till 31st Dec. 1935 except as regards the provision in (5), which continues till 30th June 1936. It may however be denounced by giving one month's notice any time after the 1st January 1935 if difficulties with regard to its working have arisen and cannot be removed.<sup>2</sup>

3. The Foreign Office have not been consulted with regard to this agreement, nor have they been in a position to follow the discussions which have led to its conclusion. They are unable, therefore, to express any opinion with regard to it.

<sup>2</sup> The text of the Agreement signed at 12.30 p.m. on November 1 by Sir F. Leith-Ross and Sir E. Phipps for His Majesty's Government and by Baron von Neurath and Dr. Schacht on behalf of the German Government is printed in Cmd. 4726 of 1934, *Anglo-German Payments Agreement, November 1, 1934*. See also 293 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 358-61.

## CHAPTER II

# Saar Plebiscite: German Rearmament October 30, 1934–January 15, 1935

No. 155

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 31)*

*No. 293 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7233/247/18]*

PARIS, October 30, 1934

I was received yesterday evening by M. Laval<sup>1</sup> of whom I had sought an interview in the hope that his ideas on the more important European problems of the hour would have had time to crystallise. He took the three questions on which I asked his views in the order in which I give them below, and it was evident both from the time which he devoted to each and from the knowledge which he displayed of it that this is the order of importance which they assume in his mind.

*Italo-Yugoslav and Franco-Yugoslav relations.* M. Laval did not demur to my suggestion that M. Barthou's policy had been momentarily checked as a result of the murder of King Alexander. He intended however to go on with it as rapidly as circumstances permitted. He would pay the visit to Rome as soon as the ground had been sufficiently prepared (an unsuccessful visit would do more harm than good). He enumerated and discussed the three questions of purely Franco-Italian concern in terms almost identical with those employed by M. Léger on October 20th (Sir George Clerk's telegrams Nos. 283 and 284 Saving)<sup>2</sup> and went on to say, as M. Léger did, that the settlement of those questions, in each of which Italy was the plaintiff, would be of no interest to France unless agreement was reached on the questions of European interest. When I remarked that that did not seem a very promising way of approaching the negotiation and that it was surely worth while to pay a certain price for an all-round settlement, M. Laval said that he intended to make a sincere effort to come to terms; the difficulty was that the Italian demands, as at present formulated, were wholly unreasonable; he was willing to allow Signor Mussolini to claim a success, but it must not be at too great a cost to France. He added that having just been for some time Minister

<sup>1</sup> See No. 145, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> These telegrams of October 20 are not printed. The three questions referred to were: Tunis; Libya; the neighbourhood of French Somaliland and the railway from Jibouti to Addis Ababa.



for the Colonies<sup>3</sup> he was in a position to exercise more influence with his old department than M. Barthou would have been able to do.

The question of European interest to which M. Laval evidently attaches the most importance is that relating to Austria which he said he did not regard as having been settled at Geneva in September.<sup>4</sup> In the event of a sudden German putsch he thought that nothing would restrain Signor Mussolini from marching into Austria, thus precipitating a general conflagration. He thought the best plan would be to try to get Italy, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia into a tri-partite agreement laying down exactly the action to be taken by each. This he thought would be not only the best deterrent to Germany but would pave the way to a complete reconciliation between Italy and the Little Entente in general. I am not at present clear what exact relationship this plan bears to Dr. Benes' idea (Sir George Clerk's telegram No. 278 Saving).<sup>5</sup>

In the course of his remarks on this question M. Laval said that he would tell me, for my strictly confidential information, that he would only go to Rome in agreement with the Yugoslav Government, though he did not propose to tell the Italians that. He hoped the visit might take place some time in December. The former of these remarks is evidence that the French Government realise that in consequence of their responsibility in the Marseilles murder they must now use a very gentle hand in their dealings with Yugoslavia. This is to some extent off-set in M. Laval's mind by his belief that Signor Mussolini, feeling also a certain responsibility, will now prove more tractable. His Majesty's Government, he said, had more influence with Signor Mussolini than any other, and he hoped they would use it in the direction of facilitating his task.

In conclusion M. Laval asked me to assure you that, while understanding that His Majesty's Government cannot commit themselves on the Austrian question further than they have done, he would take no definite step without first assuring himself that you approved. The question, he added, involving as it did the issue between war and peace, was one of general European interest. France was only directly concerned on account of her association with the Little Entente.

*Saar.* M. Laval spoke at some length of the responsibility incumbent on the League to see that every Saarlander was enabled to vote according to his conscience without fear of consequences. He would not venture to forecast the result of the plebiscite, but he imagined that of the Catholic population amounting to 52 per cent of the whole a considerable proportion at least would vote as directed by Rome. Unfortunately only an overwhelming majority in favour of return to Germany was of any use to Herr Hitler, and it was therefore necessary to be prepared for the risk of a surprise putsch designed to obscure the result of the vote if, as might well be the case, there was reason to believe it would not come up to expectations. (M. Laval did

<sup>3</sup> M. Laval had held this position in M. Doumergue's cabinet from February 9 to October 12, 1934.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 124.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 145, note 2.

not go into figures, but there are people here who having closely studied the question put the vote in favour of return to Germany as low as 65 per cent).

France, M. Laval said, was fulfilling and would continue to fulfil her responsibilities to the utmost. He had the day before seen Marshal Pétain who had shown him the military preparations which were being made. Troops would be massed on the frontier and would be ready to move at a few hours' notice. He thought that was the only way to ensure against a putsch. He [? The] responsibility however was heavy as the consequences of the employment of French troops in the event of an emergency might be very grave. It was not fair that France should be asked to bear the whole of the responsibility. Both on that ground and because of the greater deterrent effect on Germany it was desirable that other countries (he mentioned Great Britain and Italy) should participate. He did not suggest they should send large detachments but that they should be represented in what he called a symbolical manner. (See in this connexion my despatch No. 1673.)<sup>6</sup> I have just heard from an independent source that M. Corbin<sup>7</sup> is shortly to approach you in that sense. If so, it is curious that M. Laval should not have said so. There is not time to confirm before the bag closes.

What he told me as regards military preparations shows that there had been a sudden change in the attitude of the politicians and of the Quai d'Orsay who until quite recently regarded the matter mainly from the political aspect. It is clear they have now been talked over by the general staff who hold that, as a military operation is involved, it must be treated from the military aspect.

*The Eastern Pact of Mutual Assistance.* M. Laval seemed to have given little study as yet to this question. He observed that it could not be allowed to rest where it was. The time would soon come when it would be necessary to confront Poland with the alternative of collaboration with France or of losing the alliance. In reply to my question he said he thought Poland would return to reason if given clearly to understand that that was the issue.

I will shortly see M. Léger and endeavour to check up and fill out the gaps in M. Laval's remarks on each of the above three questions.

<sup>6</sup> Of October 30, not printed.

<sup>7</sup> French Ambassador at London. For Sir J. Simon's interview with M. Corbin on October 30 see No. 157 below.

## No. 156

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received October 31)*

*No. 294 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7234/291/17]*

PARIS, October 30, 1934

My telegram No. 293 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

General conclusions which I draw from interview, as well as from previous acquaintance with M. Laval, are (i) that his policy, whilst cautious and

<sup>1</sup> No. 155.

unsensational, will have a strong nationalist complexion, (ii) that he will be peculiarly open to the influence of his permanent officials, and (iii) that he is genuinely imbued with the desire to work in close intimacy with His Majesty's Government.

2. As regards (i), I have been told by someone in close touch with him that M. Doumergue, in selecting M. Barthou's successor, passed over M. Flandin,<sup>2</sup> less because of M. Tardieu's<sup>3</sup> veto (prompted by motives of jealousy) than because he thought he might take too independent a line. With M. Laval at the Quai d'Orsay M. Doumergue will be able to keep a guiding hand on French foreign policy and preserve the nationalist quality which, under M. Barthou, contributed powerfully to the confidence inspired by the national government with the country at large. M. Laval has in a high degree the peasant characteristics of caution and suspicion: he will drive a hard bargain and is unlikely to make the grand gesture, at least until he is perfectly certain that it will pay. He reminded me yesterday that he had strongly opposed the virtual renunciation of reparations and claimed to have been justified by the fact that the only thanks we got was the immediate preferment of the demand for equality of rights.<sup>4</sup>

3. As regards (ii) M. Laval is a man who does not make up his mind until he has carefully studied his subject. As he will perforce be coached by his permanent officials his views on most questions are likely to reflect those of M. Léger: indeed they are already indistinguishable from them in so far as he has yet had time to form them. On the other hand if, after studying a case, his own conclusions are at variance with those presented to him, he will not easily be induced to change them.

4. As regards (iii) M. Laval is evidently sincere in the protestations, which he repeated yesterday over and over again, of his desire to work in close understanding with His Majesty's Government. He is convinced that the only hope of salvation in Europe lies in the collaboration of the two last remaining Western democracies. He believes that a fresh war would mean the downfall of the present civilisation and the return to conditions of barbarity.<sup>5</sup>

5. Moral of above appreciation would seem to be that if there are matters on which you would desire to influence M. Laval it would be well to get at him before his views become too firmly set.

<sup>2</sup> Minister of Public Works in M. Doumergue's government.

<sup>3</sup> Minister of State without portfolio.

<sup>4</sup> A reference presumably to the effective ending of reparations after the Lausanne Conference, June 16-July 9, 1932 (see Volume III, Chapter III), followed almost immediately by the German Government's claim to 'equality of rights' in the matter of armaments (see Volume IV, Chapter II).

<sup>5</sup> It was suggested on the filed copy that this word should read 'barbarity' or 'barbarism'.

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Campbell (Paris)**No. 1647 [C 7308/291/17]*FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 30, 1934*

Sir,

M. Corbin called to-day, after his recent visit to Paris, to give me some information about the attitude of the French Government and of the new French Minister for Foreign Affairs to some current problems. The Ambassador began by referring to M. Doumergue's proposals for reforming the French Constitution on British lines so as to give the President of the Council more power to bring about a dissolution of the Chamber when he thought it necessary.<sup>1</sup> He said M. Doumergue was pursuing his plan but was not yet ready to bring it before the *Assemblée Nationale* which would have to be summoned at Versailles. M. Herriot's<sup>2</sup> recent success in persuading the Conference of the Radical Party to continue their confidence in the Government, even though the Radicals were not in all respects satisfied, had strengthened M. Doumergue's hand. Some opposition might be expected in the Senate, but even there some members of the Right were not unfavourable and there was no prominent single figure to lead the opposition. In reply to my question as to what M. Doumergue would do if his proposal failed or had to be dropped, the Ambassador said that in that case he would probably retire again into private life. M. Doumergue had emphasised to him that he had only undertaken his present task to meet an emergency and that he would be glad when he could lay down his public duties. I observed that in other countries besides France when people undertook duties in the face of a great emergency they found that it was necessary to carry on longer than they may have at first anticipated.

2. M. Corbin then gave me some indications of M. Laval's attitude on the two questions of the Saar and of Franco-Italian relations. As regards the Saar, France had made her position clear and she would do her utmost to help to secure that the plebiscite was carried through peaceably and in due order. The question had been raised, however, whether, if the Council of the League called upon France to restore order in that region, French troops would be ready to do so, and the Ambassador indicated that the necessary plans and dispositions had been made. I expressed the earnest hope that nothing of the sort would ever be called for. I said that we regarded our duty as a member of the Council of the League in connexion with the Saar plebiscite as that of a Returning Officer at an election. Our object would be to do our utmost to see that the plebiscite was regularly and peaceably conducted, that the result was properly ascertained and was duly published. I well understood that both France and Germany had special interests in the

<sup>1</sup> M. Doumergue had announced his proposed constitutional reforms in a broadcast speech on September 24; see *The Times*, September 25, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Leader of the Socialist Radical party and Minister of State without portfolio in M. Doumergue's government.

way that the vote might go, but so far as this country was concerned we were, under the terms of the Treaty, merely required to take our part in the Council in the proper conduct of the voting: the result of the voting was not our proper concern. The Ambassador made no specific reference to the recent French memorandum.<sup>3</sup>

3. As regards Franco-Italian relations, M. Corbin said that M. Barthou's death had necessarily involved some check to the policy which France was pursuing, but that M. Laval intended to follow the same line and to pay a visit to Italy as soon as the ground was sufficiently prepared. He indicated the end of November as being about the probable date. It would do more harm than good for M. Laval to go to Rome without more preliminary negotiation, for such journeys could not be repeated. The Ambassador spoke as though there was very little immediate prospect of solving Franco-Italian problems in Africa and appeared to regard the whole prospect of Franco-Italian adjustment as very doubtful. I said that we most earnestly hoped that France would make a great effort to come to terms with Italy. Signor Mussolini's Milan speech<sup>4</sup> seemed to provide the atmosphere for this, and we had exerted ourselves to the utmost, both in Rome and in Belgrade, to induce moderation and remove danger after the tragedy of Marseilles. After all, what were these Franco-Italian differences as compared with the prize of European appeasement which a generous and forthcoming attitude on the part of France might help to secure? If the Franco-Italian situation did not improve now, it might get worse for some time to come, and in that case the consequences might be far more grave than anything which was at stake in these minor disputes. We hoped, therefore, that France would be able to make good use of the opportunity which the approaching discussions at Rome might offer.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably the aide-mémoire of August 31; cf. No. 75, note 16.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 132, note 3.

## No. 158

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 1, 9.50 a.m.)*

*No. 226 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7261/74/18]*

BERLIN, October 31, 1934

Great prominence is given this evening to the 'Times' report<sup>1</sup> that French troops are to be placed at the disposal of the Saar Governing Commission should they require them. Similar reports by the 'Matin' and 'Oeuvre' are also given publicity.

A semi-official communiqué has been issued by the German Government of which the following is the gist:

These press reports are calculated to arouse anxiety both in Germany and the Saar. Given a suitable pretext military preparations of this kind may

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, October 31, p. 14.

easily lead to an act of violence, and even the threat of action in itself is an unjustifiable attempt to influence the plebiscite. The German Government and the German people have no other desire than to carry out the plebiscite in accordance with the treaty and find a solution of the Saar question on the basis of the result. It is contrary to the treaty and to the spirit of the plebiscite for a power concerned in the plebiscite to be entrusted by the trustee—in this case the League of Nations—with a military action.

Despite all provocation on the part of emigré circles the Saar population will continue to observe discipline, and Germany has every interest to encourage the Saar population to do so in order that they may be free to vote for Germany on 30th January<sup>2</sup> next.

<sup>2</sup> This should read 'January 13'.

## No. 159

### *Memorandum by Mr. Sargent on German Rearmament*

[C 7088/20/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 31, 1934*

The search for the exact date when Germany will be ready for an aggressive war is, I think, somewhat beside the point. There is nothing to show that Hitler, and still less the Reichswehr, are preparing for a war of aggression in the near future. Such a policy would indeed be sheer madness, unless Hitler were ready to fight the whole of Europe, and to get Germany into a fit state—militarily and economically—to do that would be a work, not of a few years but of decades. No: what Hitler, I have little doubt, is aiming at is to accumulate a sufficient amount of military force behind him to enable him to achieve his objectives one by one by the silent threat of force, but without the use, or even the display, of force. In fact, what he intends is an aggressive *policy* and not an aggressive *war*, and there is no reason why at the present rate of Germany's rearmament on the one hand, and of the international disintegration of the rest of Europe on the other, he should not be able to start on this policy in the near future. This is what Sir R. Vansittart, in his minute on C 4297,<sup>1</sup> called 'being ready for mischief before 1938'.

To put it another way. The trouble will begin as soon as other European Governments realise—as they soon will—that Germany has become too strong for any one of them singly to defend itself against German ambitions by means of a preventive war, (i.e. the term used for a war of aggression when looked at from the point of view of the aggressor). To take a concrete case. As soon as Hitler feels strong enough to embark on his policy of aggression, Mussolini will no longer dare single-handed to risk a war against Germany in order to prevent her from absorbing Austria. He would want

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to a minute of July 24, 1934, by Sir R. Vansittart on a communication (not printed) of July 5 from the War Office dealing with German rearmament.

the military assistance of France, the Little Entente, and ourselves, and even German diplomacy will hardly be able to make sufficient blunders to bring about such a concentration of opposition.

Thus Germany would have achieved one of her objectives, not by fighting but by intimidation, and not because she was in a position to wage a war of aggression, but because her opponent was no longer in a position, without running undue risks, to wage a war of aggression against her. The same thing could happen with Memel and ultimately with the Corridor. Indeed, one might almost say that it is bound to happen unless Germany's policy of aggression is met by a common policy of co-ordinated defence on the part of the rest of Europe—and of that there is no sign at present.

O. G. SARGENT

### No. 160

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 2, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 297 Saving: Telegraphic [R 6101/5311/67]*

PARIS, November 1, 1934

My telegram No. 293 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

I saw M. Léger yesterday evening and asked him how far M. Laval's plan for dealing with the Austrian question had developed. He said, as I had rather expected, that it was only a personal idea of M. Laval's (I inferred that he thought it would never be anything more!). The position was this: the French government were persuaded that matters could not be allowed to rest where they were; the potentialities were too explosive. Some kind of multi-lateral agreement should be found with the object of regulating the situation and of averting the risk of a clash between Italy on the one hand and Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia on the other. Unfortunately, Italy had refused the other day at Geneva to entertain any arrangement by which she would hold her mandate from the League of Nations or to which the Little Entente was a party. There were no indications at present that she was prepared to modify that attitude. That was as far as the question had got.

2. M. Léger then went on to speak, very pessimistically, of the prospect of reaching any kind of agreement with Italy. He had just seen the Italian Ambassador who had said that it was useless to try to come to an understanding with Yugoslavia and had hinted that the problem of Franco-Italian relations should be disjoined from that of Italo-Yugoslav relations. That, M. Léger said, the French government would in no circumstances agree to do; one of the first objects of the conversations with Italy was the improvement of the relations between that country and Yugoslavia which at present were like an open barrel of dynamite. It was also significant that the Italian government, in demanding the prolongation for so long a period as ten years of the *modus vivendi* in Tunis, which gave Italian citizens treatment

<sup>1</sup> No. 155.

superior not only to other foreign but actually also to French nationals, were virtually seeking to remove from the negotiations the only one of the purely Franco-Italian questions which it was a French interest to settle. It was impossible in the circumstances not to doubt the sincerity of the Italian government.

## No. 161

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 2)*

*No. 299 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7286/74/18]*

PARIS, November 1, 1934

My telegram No. 297 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

On passing to the Saar question I found that M. Laval had been a little premature in speaking to me as reported in my telegram No. 293 (Saving).<sup>2</sup> It is true, I ascertained, that a number of alternative plans, according to the nature of the operation contemplated, have been prepared by the general staff, but they have not yet, as implied by M. Laval, been approved by the government. This is also confirmed by the military attaché<sup>3</sup> who has left for London on leave of absence taking full details with him.

2. None the less there has been a great advance in the last few days. The government, who had hitherto been timid in authorising any military preparations which might appear to be provocative, have now woken up to a sense of their responsibilities. The result however of realising that the entry into the Saar of French troops (as opposed to police) may have far-reaching consequences is the request for (a) a formal mandate from the League, (b) token representation of other nations.

<sup>1</sup> No. 160.

<sup>2</sup> No. 155.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel T. G. G. Heywood.

## No. 162

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 2, 5.30 p.m.)*

*No. 228 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7322/74/18]*

BERLIN, November 1, 1934

My despatch No. 1290 of today.<sup>1</sup>

The French Ambassador is much perturbed by the German press campaign over the Saar and particularly by the statement of the 'Diplomatic Political Correspondence' quoted in paragraph 2 of my above-mentioned despatch.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. It referred to No. 158 and reported further German press comments on possible French armed intervention in the Saar.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 2 read as follows: 'The view of the semi-official "Diplomatic Political Correspondence" is perhaps worth quoting in full. "An occupation of the Saar territory



Moreover, His Excellency has had a conversation with Herr von Bülow who adopted a very intransigent attitude in the matter. Herr von Bülow declared that it would be a violation of the treaty for French troops to enter Saar territory on any pretext whatsoever, now that the Rhineland was no longer occupied by the French.

Monsieur François Poncet<sup>3</sup> fears that in case French troops should, as a result of some attack on Mr. Knox and in reply to an appeal from the latter, enter the Saar, Germany would immediately consider this a *casus belli* and in any case invoke the Treaty of Locarno.

I told Monsieur François Poncet that Baron von Neurath did not seem to take the situation too tragically for he did not even mention the matter to me today when we signed the Anglo-German Payments Agreement.<sup>4</sup> His Excellency nevertheless feels the controversy to be dangerous and his personal opinion is that the legal aspects of the question should be considered by the signatories of Locarno before any incident occurs.

by French troops", it states, "under any pretext whatever, would be a challenge not to Germany alone, and a violation of the plebiscite territory which is under the guardianship of the League of Nations. The positively suspicious zeal of certain political and military circles in France to provide French troops for such an action is in contradiction to the actual situation in the Saar territory. For it must be surprising even to the public opinion of the rest of the world that the plebiscite courts, which have been sitting in the Saar for some months now, have not yet had to deal with a single case of terrorism in the Saar. The discipline of the Saar population has, in spite of every provocation on the part of the émigrés who have misused the hospitality accorded them, proved itself decisively, and it is for this population a further offensive suggestion that they should be placed under the control of a military Power, the one-sided sympathies of which cannot be doubted by anyone. Even playing with the idea of an action of this kind should therefore be most decisively rejected by the public opinion of the entire world. The responsibility for this extreme trial of patience, which is only calculated to throw Europe back to the tense days of the march into the Ruhr, must fall upon those who tolerate it. In order to dispel in future, once and for ever, these very tensions and dangers, and to spare Germany, France and the rest of the world the plebiscite campaign and all that might accompany or succeed it—a campaign which in view of the purely German character of the territory is wholly superfluous—the Leader and Chancellor of the German Reich had repeatedly proclaimed his readiness to arrive at an agreement for a normal solution of the Saar question. This was refused on the ground of the allegedly binding obligations of the Treaty of Versailles [cf. Volume VI, No. 79, paragraph 6 and No. 143, enclosure 1]. The ground for this refusal then brought forward must all the more appear to have been exclusively a pretext, if the reports current to-day in regard to dangerous French intentions should prove accurate."'

<sup>3</sup> French Ambassador at Berlin since 1931.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 154, note 2.

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 3, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 229 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7323/74/18]*

BERLIN, November 2, 1934

My telegram No. 228 (Saving)<sup>1</sup> of November 1st.

The Havas statement<sup>2</sup> issued yesterday explaining the French attitude in the matter of sending troops to the Saar has not calmed opinion here, and the 'Times' is quoted again to-day as evidence that the position is serious. Such headlines as 'A new Ruhr Adventure?', 'Violation of Locarno', 'Paris hopes to get British Troops to invade the Saar' appeared in the morning press. Leading articles beseech the League and the signatories of Locarno to remind France of her obligations and be vigilant. The 'Lokal Anzeiger' accuses France of shaking a mailed fist in Germany's face, while the 'Börsen Zeitung' says that the invasion of the Saar would be an act of war. The existence of any legal ground for French military interference in any circumstances is of course denied vigorously everywhere.

The 'Führer', a new Nazi organ, reminds the French that the Saar is not the Ruhr, and that the Germany of to-day, united as one man behind the Führer, is not the Germany of ten years ago.

The press this evening is more alarmed than ever by a Reuter telegram from Paris to the effect that French mechanised units are ready to advance if Mr. Knox sends out an S.O.S. to say that the local gendarmerie cannot cope with the situation.

The 'Berliner Tageblatt' is alarmed by the idea that 'so notoriously biased a man as Mr. Knox' should have the decision in a matter which may have incalculable results for European peace. Other newspapers recall the preparations for the Ruhr invasion.

The 'Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung' writes that nothing would allay the tension so much as a British statement discountenancing invasion. The 'Angriff' beseeches us to respect the Locarno and other treaties. The legal position is so clear, it says, that it is almost an insult to doubt England's attitude for a moment.

Several newspapers express the hope that in your interview with the French Ambassador<sup>3</sup> you reminded him of the stipulations of the Locarno Pact.

<sup>1</sup> No. 162.

<sup>2</sup> Printed in *Le Temps* of November 2. It included the following statement: 'Des mesures de police nécessitant l'emploi de forces françaises ne sauraient intervenir qu'en exécution d'obligations internationales résultant, pour la France, des résolutions prises en 1925 et 1926 par le conseil de la Société des nations, et sur l'appel formel de la commission de gouvernement, organisme international, responsable, sous l'autorité de la Société des nations, du maintien de l'ordre et, "en toutes circonstances, de la protection des personnes et des biens en Sarre".'

<sup>3</sup> On October 30; see No. 157.

No. 164

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 3, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 230 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7349/74/18]*

BERLIN, November 2, 1934

My immediately preceding telegram Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Their [*sic*] seems to be a belief in official circles here that Communists or emigrants in the Saar if satisfied that French are prepared to send troops will deliberately engineer an incident so as to secure invasion. That the fear is genuinely entertained there can be no doubt. It is typical of the atmosphere prevailing here.

Italian Ambassador saw Minister for Foreign Affairs today and extracted from him promise to send a Saar expert from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Rome in order to discuss matters with Baron Aloisi's committee which meets on November 6th. His Excellency is pleased at this decision for hitherto Germans had declined, unlike French, to send any expert.

Baron von Neurath was not too disturbed but nevertheless fears some action by Nazi hot-head in the Saar might give French the pretext for armed intervention. He assured Italian Ambassador that he had obtained definite promise from S.A. and S.S. leaders here that they would not encourage any provocative action from here.

<sup>1</sup> No. 163.

No. 165

*Sir P. Loraine (Angora) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 7, 11 a.m.)*

*No. 37 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7473/247/18]*

*Very confidential*

ANGORA, November 2, 1934

At an evening reception I had some speech with Roumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>1</sup> with whom I was previously unacquainted.

(1) The principal theme of his conversation was absolute necessity for taking measures to stop present series of political assassinations which he attributed to organised terrorist associations. For the purpose he advocated international co-operation adding that actually the only thing that would overawe the countries which tolerate these terrorist organisations in their territory would be a firm public stand taken in England or in France. He regarded it as monstrous that men like himself who were striving to consolidate peace should have to live under constant threat of trained assassin's pistol and he added that to his certain knowledge both he and M. Benes were doomed men. I think he is likely to raise this matter with you at Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> M. Titulescu.

(2) He was reassuring about the attitude of four Powers of the Balkan Pact<sup>2</sup> towards Bulgaria. He said the position now was that it suited everyone just as well, whether Bulgaria came into the Pact or remained outside. For his part, and he thought his three partners were similarly placed, perfectly friendly relations with Bulgaria would be maintained and practised. The Bulgarians had tried to wean the late King Alexander from his co-signatories and to cloak the virtual if not the nominal defection of Yugoslavia. The attempt failed utterly and failure had brought about a more salutary frame of mind at Sofia.

(3) M. Titulescu expressed shocked amazement and disgust at written reply sent by Poland to France in regard to proposed Eastern European Pact of Mutual Guarantee.<sup>3</sup> The late M. Barthou had shown him the Polish communication and he took it as the supreme irony that 'his Polish ally' should (a) make her accession dependent on Germany and (b) refuse to guarantee the frontier either of Lithuania or Czechoslovakia. Poland, he feared, had fallen completely into the lap of Germany. He must suppose her promised reward was territorial compensation may be in Lithuania and the Ukraine.

Repeated to Bucharest No. 10 Saving.

<sup>2</sup> A pact had been signed on February 9, 1934, by representatives of Greece, Roumania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia mutually guaranteeing their respective Balkan frontiers. For the text, see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 137, pp. 496-9.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 121, note 2.

## No. 166

*Letter from Mr. Walters (Geneva) to Mr. Strang*

[C 7433/74/18]

*Confidential*

GENEVA, November 2, 1934

My dear William,

In reply to your letter of October 30th,<sup>1</sup> I send you herewith a note<sup>2</sup> which with its enclosures<sup>2</sup> will give you a fair general picture of the situation as regards Saar questions. There has been, as you will see, a good deal of technical study done since the Council, but no substantial progress has been made. This is due to the fact that the Germans have so far failed to carry out the Rapporteur's request to negotiate on certain points, or even to answer questions as to the point of view of the German Government.

You will see from the agenda of next week's meeting that on one or two points the Secretariat has been asked to produce a legal opinion. This opinion, of course, is for the confidential use of the Committee of Three. Even so, it perhaps goes a little beyond the proper competence of the Secretariat, but we could not well decline the job.

<sup>1</sup> In this letter, not printed, Mr. Strang asked for 'some indication of what has been done by the Committee of Three in connection with the various matters referred to them by the Council for study and for report'. Cf. Nos. 82 and 122.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

I should like to draw your attention to one particular point, namely what the French call 'définition du régime établi par les traités'. As you know, they are anxious to secure some sort of a statement which will show the voters that a decision not to return to Germany now would not necessarily mean that there should not be a change later in consequence of some further initiative by the population of the Saar. I understand that according to the German view this is contrary to the treaty. It appears to be a point of great importance for some, at least, of the voters, and may therefore be a serious question for the Council, so that perhaps it would be well to form your own opinion as to the meaning of the treaty on this question. Also as to the extent of the powers given to the Council by the last sentence of § 35(a) of the Saar Annex,<sup>3</sup> about adapting the régime etc. Could the Council set up a democratic gov[ernment] in the Saar?<sup>4</sup>

Last week the French asked that the period laid down in the plebiscite regulations for the sending in of objections to the voting lists which were published in their first form on September 26th, should be extended. They complained that the lists were very badly drawn up, and that the thirty days given for making claims or objections were inadequate. The Plebiscite Commission replied that the published statements that the lists were badly drawn up were in their view unjustified, and that they could not see their way to extend the time-limit. I understand that the French have taken this decision in good part.

Yours ever,

FRANK WALTERS

<sup>3</sup> In Part III, Section IV, of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

<sup>4</sup> In the course of minutes attached to this letter, Sir H. W. Malkin, Legal Adviser in the Foreign Office, wrote on November 9, with regard to this paragraph: 'I find it difficult to believe that the intention of the Treaty was not that the future of the territory should be decided once and for all as the result of the plebiscite. In this connexion I may refer to the phrase in (a) of paragraph 35, under which, in the event of the League deciding in favour of the maintenance of the existing régime, it would be its duty to "adapt the régime definitively adopted ('définitivement instauré') to the permanent welfare of the territory and the general interest". The words "definitively" and "permanent" seem to me to be inconsistent with the idea of a continuance of the régime which was expressly stated to be subject to a possible modification at a later date.'

## No. 167

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 5, 5.45 p.m.)  
No. 231 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7394/20/18]*

BERLIN, November 3, 1934

Mr. Campbell's telegram No. 295 Saving<sup>1</sup> of October 30 (4th paragraph).

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. In paragraph 4 Mr. Campbell mentioned that he had heard from an independent source of 'a report from M. François-Poncet painting a most gloomy picture of the situation in Germany and predicting war in the spring'. Mr. Campbell added that he knew

The French Ambassador here is, in effect, as I have from time to time reported, very pessimistic and inclined to predict the possibility of war in the near future.

Monsieur François-Poncet's thesis is briefly the following:—

The French army is in a bad state owing to the 'lean years' and want of good organisation in the past; the French internal situation is unsatisfactory: the British armed forces are to all intents and purposes negligible. On the other hand, Germany has rearmed far more than we think, is aware of all the foregoing considerations, has reinsured herself by the Polish Agreement, counts on Franco-Italian dissensions or, in case those dissensions should be composed, feels sure that Yugoslavia will never be opposed to her and therefore may well soon feel that the favourable moment has come to strike.

When Monsieur François-Poncet expounds his views to me I always reply by pointing out that it seems hardly conceivable that Germany should risk war when she is in the very midst of expanding her army from 100,000 to 300,000. The time required for the completion of that expansion is clearly a military matter upon which I am not competent to pronounce, but it would presumably require a minimum of two to three years to bring to completion. My arguments, however, always fail to convince Monsieur François-Poncet, some of whose reasons for pessimism are, I think, of a personal nature.

It must be remembered that Monsieur François-Poncet, when he came here about three years ago, was a French politician of the Tardieu nuance. He has worked ceaselessly towards bringing about a better understanding between France and Germany and in doing so has risked his political career and reputation amongst his French friends of the Right, some of whom go so far as to declare that he has been a traitor to his country. In return for all these efforts he was publicly accused by the Chancellor in the Reichstag of plotting against Germany (see my despatch No. 839 of July 17th),<sup>2</sup> and this of course may explain in some measure his feelings of discouragement.

from other sources that M. Poncet had been 'talking in that strain in parliamentary and journalistic circles' in Paris but he was not in a position to say how far M. Poncet was 'doing this from conviction and how far from the desire to stop his countrymen from quarrelling among themselves in the midst of a threatening international situation'.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

## No. 168

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 1215 [C 7374/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 5, 1934*

Sir,

The German Ambassador called on Mr. Sargent on October 30th on the subject of the Saar. Monsieur von Hoesch said that he was instructed to state

that the German Government, having studied the French memorandum<sup>1</sup> at present under consideration by the Committee of Three, wished His Majesty's Government to know that they could not agree that the Council had the right to interpret Part A of Article 35 of the Saar Annexe in such a way as to provide that, in the event of the Saar voting for the 'maintenance of the present régime', there should be a further plebiscite at some subsequent date.

2. Similarly, the German Government could not agree, in the event of the plebiscite going in favour of Germany, that there should be any restrictions placed upon German sovereignty, either in respect of minorities or vested interests.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 157, note 3.

### No. 169

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 1220 [C 7434/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 5, 1934*

Sir,

I asked Herr von Hoesch this morning whether he could confirm the statements contained in a despatch to 'The Times' from Berlin on Friday last<sup>1</sup> that the German authorities had issued orders to the S.A. and S.S. formations on the German side of the Saar frontier prohibiting, over a belt 25 miles wide and over a period which covers the date of the taking of the plebiscite, the wearing of uniforms, parades, processions or gatherings of any kind, and had at the same time issued a solemn assurance that there is no danger of an invasion of the territory of the Saar.

2. The Ambassador said that he could personally confirm the truth of this report but that he would prefer to communicate with Berlin and get specific instructions from his Government to give me this assurance. Later in the morning the German Embassy sent me a message that this had been done and that I might take it that orders to this effect had been issued by the German Government authorities.<sup>2</sup>

3. I told Herr von Hoesch of my satisfaction at this announcement. It would be all the better, I thought, if the orders so given came into effect earlier than January 10th. To this the Ambassador replied that it would be difficult, now that the orders had been published, to issue a correction ante-dating the period to which they applied. I told the Ambassador that I was going to express His Majesty's Government's satisfaction at the German action to the French Ambassador and expected to receive from the latter an assurance that any plans that the French might have in contemplation for

<sup>1</sup> November 2. See *The Times*, November 3, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, p. 568, note 5.

lending the aid of their troops in case of need to the Saar Governing Commission were merely precautionary. The responsibility for maintaining order in the Saar basin rests with the Governing Commission of the Saar, and although the Council of the League as long ago as 1926<sup>3</sup> had contemplated that in case of absolute necessity the Saar Commission might call upon troops stationed outside the Saar territory and in the vicinity of its frontiers to assist in maintaining order, it was clearly understood that nothing of the sort could arise without a request from the Saar Commission. I expected the French Ambassador to confirm this view, and in these circumstances His Majesty's Government felt that we had every right to expect that, with due restraint in all quarters, the plebiscite, which it is the duty of the Council of the League to conduct, would be carried through properly and in due order on the 13th January.

4. Herr von Hoesch said that he recalled the discussion which took place in 1926 very well, for he had had dealings with M. Briand about it at the time.<sup>4</sup> The question that was then raised had, he thought, nothing to do with the plebiscite. It was connected with the security in certain events of French troops who were then occupying the Rhineland. I said that, however that might be, His Majesty's Government were now exerting themselves to secure that the plebiscite should be carried through properly and without disturbance, and we most earnestly hoped that nothing would occur, either on the German or the French side, to disturb this prospect. I appealed to the Ambassador to do his utmost to see that Mr. Knox was left to carry through his difficult task without further agitation, and hoped that the statement which I should be making later in the day in the House of Commons (see my telegram No. 212)<sup>5</sup> would contribute to this end.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 103, note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Herr von Hoesch was German Ambassador at Paris, 1926-32.

<sup>5</sup> Not printed. For Sir J. Simon's statement concerning the maintenance of order in the Saar Territory, see 293 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 617-18. Sir J. Simon said: 'There never has been any question of the use of British troops, and nothing of the sort on our part is contemplated.'

## No. 170

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Campbell (Paris)*

*No. 1669 [C 7435/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 5, 1934*

Sir,

I asked M. Corbin to call to-day and saw him after my interview with Herr von Hoesch, which is recorded in my despatch No. 1220 to Sir Eric Phipps.<sup>1</sup> I told the French Ambassador the substance of this interview and

<sup>1</sup> No. 169.



expressed my satisfaction that the German Government authorities should have issued the orders recently announced restraining S.A. and S.S. demonstrations and manœuvres in a 25-mile belt to the east of the Saar territory during the period covering the plebiscite. I told M. Corbin that I should be making a short statement in Parliament this afternoon<sup>2</sup> on the subject of law and order in the Saar and read or repeated to him material passages in my draft. I asked for his confirmation of the passage 'any French dispositions in the part of France bordering on the Saar territory on the west are purely precautionary', and he assured me that any arrangements which the French had made were of a purely precautionary kind. We agreed that no question could arise of the use of external force for preserving order in the Saar unless the Saar Governing Commission is unable to discharge the task laid upon it and is compelled to ask for assistance. I expressed the firm hope that this contingency would not arise, and said that if all parties exercised due restraint we had the right to expect that the plebiscite, which it is the duty of the Council of the League to conduct, will be carried through properly and in due order on January 13th.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, note 5.

#### No. 171

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 6)*

*No. 1696 [C 7426/20/18]*

PARIS, November 5, 1934

Sir,

In reply to your despatch No. 1534<sup>1</sup> of the 9th ultimo, I have the honour to state that I took a recent opportunity of enquiring of Monsieur Massigli whether the French government had any evidence to the effect that the German government intended shortly to denounce Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.

2. M. Massigli replied that M. François Poncet had had not long ago the impression, though he had had nothing definite to go by, that the German government intended to take that step in the near future. Recently, however, the ambassador had come to the conclusion that they would postpone any such move until after the plebiscite in the Saar. In support of that theory he drew my attention to an article, for what it was worth, which had appeared that day in the 'Temps' and of which I have the honour to enclose a cutting herein.<sup>2</sup>

3. When I attempted to elicit M. Massigli's view as to the complications which might ensue from a unilateral denunciation by Germany of her treaty

<sup>1</sup> See No. 134, note 5.

<sup>2</sup> This cutting from *Le Temps* of November 4 is not here printed.

obligations, M. Massigli would say no more than that it would add yet another grave problem to the number with which we were already confronted.

I have, &c.,

R. H. CAMPBELL

### No. 172

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 7, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 305 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7444/74/18]*

PARIS, November 6, 1934

Your statement in the House yesterday about the Saar<sup>1</sup> has produced an excellent impression here. 'Temps' in leading article draws attention to its admirable directness, and press in general regards it as certain to safeguard peace and to consolidate the general situation. Gratitude is widely expressed to you for having created at [? an] atmosphere of appeasement.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 169, note 5.

### No. 173

*Letter from Mr. Knox (Saarbrücken) to Mr. Sargent*

*[C 7503/74/18]*

SAARBRÜCKEN, November 6, 1934

My dear Sargent,

I enclose a very long report which we have sent to-day to the Council, dealing with the activities of the 'Deutsche Front'<sup>1</sup> as shown from its own archives. The enclosed private letter to Avenol<sup>1</sup> explains the reasons which have impelled us to communicate this report in spite of the considerations that might be thought to militate against it. They are, in a word, that after its publication it would be impossible for the German Government to disclaim responsibility in the event of a 'Volks Erhebung'<sup>2</sup> here.

The outburst in the German press on the subject of French troops has, I think, on the whole a good effect from our point of view, particularly since authorized voices—Braun von Stumm, a diplomatist now in the Propaganda Ministry, and a leader of the 'Deutsche Front'—have lately been affirming in restricted circles here that, if the Council were to decide in November in favour of the possibility of a 'second vote', there would be an outbreak in the Saar.

<sup>1</sup> The report, and Mr. Knox's covering letter to M. Avenol, are printed in *L/N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1645–60. According to the report there was 'abundant evidence' to the effect that the Deutsche Front, created on March 1, 1934, was 'merely a continuation of the National-Socialist Party' in the Saar.

<sup>2</sup> Popular rising.

Personal attacks on me in the radio which had ceased since October 10th, have now recommenced: those of our local press have taken on a more subtle form, as you will see from the extracts enclosed.<sup>3</sup>

I leave to-day for Rome and will be back at the end of next week.

Yours ever

(for G. G. Knox)

H. CHARLES DICK

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

## No. 174

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 7, 8.50 a.m.)*

*No. 340 Telegraphic [C 7442/74/18]*

*Confidential*

ROME, November 7, 1934, 1 a.m.

Walters of the League of Nations Secretariat tells me that Germans have sent two delegates to negotiate at the present meeting in Rome of Baron Aloisi's sub-committee.

Today German representatives stated that they would not negotiate under the menace of the entry of French troops into the Saar territory. They observed that while they could give full assurances that nothing would happen to create disorder from the German side persons who have taken refuge in the Saar from the present German régime constituted a danger to public order since these refugees might try to create a situation with which local commander as now furnished could not deal, in the hope that the French troops would be summoned to maintain order. They therefore asked for the expulsion of these refugees and stated that German Government were making a *démarche* to this effect in London and Paris. They added that if the French troops entered the Saar they did not consider that the plebiscite could take place. Baron Aloisi informed them that these were matters for the Governing Commission and for the Council and that his sub-committee had now been convoked to deal with more technical problems.<sup>1</sup>

Walters has the impression that the Germans will ultimately consent to and participate in the Committee's discussions.

<sup>1</sup> For a German account of this discussion see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 299.

## No. 175

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 8, 11 a.m.)*

*No. 233 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7502/74/18]*

BERLIN, November 7, 1934

I met Baron von Neurath and Herr von Buelow at Soviet Embassy this afternoon.

They are both still perturbed about the Saar and say that they have proof of machine guns etc. having been smuggled to communists there from France. They deny the right of the French, as one of the interested parties, to send troops in any conceivable circumstances. Herr von Buelow said Germany would have just as much right to send troops as France. Moreover once French troops occupied the Saar the Germans would have to pay to get them out. I replied that certain French people had feared that we should remain at Calais after the war, but that fear had proved unfounded. Herr von Buelow who as usual was aggressive said that instructions had been sent to the German representatives to Locarno Powers to put German case strongly before the respective Governments. He added that French Ambassador, who has left for Paris, told him yesterday that the French would certainly send in troops *after* the plebiscite if there were any disorders.

Baron von Neurath put forward purely personal suggestion that renewed pressure might be brought to bear on Switzerland to send troops and gendarmes to the Saar in case of absolute necessity.

**No. 176**

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 9)*

*No. 1709 [C 7486/247/18]*

PARIS, November 7, 1934

Sir,

I recently asked the Political Director of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs whether he could tell me what the French Government proposed to do in face of the set-back to the negotiations of the Eastern Pact of Mutual Assistance.

2. He replied that they still attached great importance to the organisation of regional security in Eastern Europe; neither the reply of the German Government nor of the Polish Government to the request for a statement of their attitude had definitely closed the door, and the French Government would therefore persevere. They proposed shortly to resume discussions with Poland. They would take the text of the memorandum<sup>1</sup> handed to M. Barthou during the Assembly of the League of Nations and by means of a reasoned answer to each of the arguments advanced therein endeavour to break down the Polish objections. They would take their time over this process, as even if they were successful in winning over the Polish Government, they thought it better to say no more on the question to the German Government until after the plebiscite in the Saar.

3. I remarked that I thought the trouble with Poland had been in considerable measure due to the fact that she had not been consulted until the negotiations with the Soviets were complete. M. Bargeton denied the impeachment; the discussions with Moscow, he asserted, had been long and laborious; the

<sup>1</sup> See No. 121, note 2.

entry of Russia into the League had all along been an essential element of the scheme; it was shortly after she had at length agreed to apply for admission that M. Barthou, during a visit which M. Beck had paid to Paris early last June, had expounded the scheme to him.

4. M. Bargeton replied in the negative to my question whether, in the renewed attempt to win over the Polish Government, any modification of the scheme as propounded last summer<sup>2</sup> was contemplated.

I have, &c.,

R. H. CAMPBELL

<sup>2</sup> See Volume VI, No. 472, Annex 1.

### No. 177

*Mr. Palairët (Bucharest) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 12)*

*No. 392 [R 6293/37/3]*

*Confidential*

BUCHAREST, November 8, 1934

Sir,

Monsieur Titulescu returned last night to Bucharest from Sofia,<sup>1</sup> the Government crisis in France<sup>2</sup> having made it useless for him to proceed direct to Paris from Bulgaria, as he had originally intended. I paid him a visit today before going on leave, and he devoted an hour and a half to the discussion of recent political events.

2. He told me that he was very well satisfied with the result of his visit to Angora<sup>3</sup> and of the discussions which had taken place there. The most important decision which had been taken was in connection with the burning question of the independence of Austria. After long consideration, the following line of policy had been agreed upon.

3. If France and Italy were to agree between themselves to guarantee the independence of Austria without reference to the Little Entente, well and good—the latter would make no move and would not ask to participate. If, on the other hand, the Little Entente were invited to participate in guaranteeing the independence of Austria, they would reply that they could not do so unless Italy entered into a security pact with them which would amount to a guarantee by Italy of their frontiers. It would also be a *sine qua non* that Greece and Turkey should participate in the guarantee of Austrian independence, for if left out of such an arrangement they would feel themselves defenceless against Italy and would gravitate towards Germany, which must at all costs be avoided. The Little Entente and the Balkan Entente would

<sup>1</sup> M. Titulescu had visited Sofia from November 5 to 6.

<sup>2</sup> M. Doumergue resigned on November 8 and was succeeded as President of the Council by M. Flandin. M. Laval retained office as Minister for Foreign Affairs and M. Herriot as Minister without portfolio.

<sup>3</sup> A conference of the Balkan Pact powers (cf. No. 165, note 2) had been held at Angora, October 29–November 2.

also suggest that Germany and Russia should be asked to join in the guarantee of Austrian independence, so that no great Power should consider itself slighted by omission. If Germany were to decline to join, then it would be unnecessary to ask Russia; but, in any case, if the Little Entente were asked to join with France and Italy in a guarantee of Austrian independence, they and the Balkan Entente would insist on an Italian guarantee of their security as a price of their participation.

4. Monsieur Titulescu showed me a typewritten document summarizing these points, and told me that he regarded the proposal as of the highest importance, for it provided a basis for the policy to be pursued by Yugoslavia towards Italy. It also opened the way to a Mediterranean Pact.

5. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's representatives at Belgrade,<sup>4</sup> Vienna and Rome.

I have, &c.,

MICHAEL PALAIRET

<sup>4</sup> In Belgrade despatch No. 205 of November 21 Mr. N. Henderson reported that the Political Director of the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs had confirmed the information, as reported in the above Bucharest despatch No. 392, regarding the attitude of the Little and Balkan Entente States towards a guarantee of Austrian independence. M. Pourić also observed that Yugoslavia had 'no desire to be invited to participate in such a guarantee, but if she were invited it was a case of all or none and a mutual guarantee all round. He also laid stress on the point that this decision of principle provided the basis for a Mediterranean Pact provided His Majesty's Government were willing to give it their general support.'

## No. 178

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 1249 [C 7598/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 9, 1934*

Sir,

Herr von Hoesch informed me to-day that the German Ambassador in Paris had been instructed to protest against the attitude of the French Government in relation to the impending Saar plebiscite.<sup>1</sup> The German Government was at the same time informing the Governments of Italy, Belgium and of this country (it may be significant that he referred to these as 'the Locarno Powers') of the nature of this protest, and he was seeing me for that purpose.

2. Herr von Hoesch made three points. First, he said that the situation envisaged and dealt with by the Council of the League when on March 18th, 1926,<sup>2</sup> they took note of the report of the Saar Governing Commission claiming to be entitled to call upon troops outside the territory and in the vicinity of its frontiers to assist in maintaining order, had nothing to do with the plebiscite. The situation then referred to was connected with the French

<sup>1</sup> For Herr Koester's instructions, dated November 5, see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 297; cf. *ibid.*, No. 300.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 103, note 5.

occupation of the Rhineland and the safety of the railway communications inside the Saar basin which were necessary for that occupation. Indeed, he said that the language of the Council resolution made this plain. Now that the occupation was withdrawn, the proceedings of 1926, according to him, had no relevance. Secondly, Herr von Hoesch expounded the German view of the legal position under the relevant articles of the Treaty of Versailles. According to this view, the Saar basin was German territory, though its administration for the time being was put in other hands. Consequently, as the German Government contended, there could be no circumstances in which French troops would be justified in entering the region. Thirdly, the Ambassador complained that French activities were directed to transforming the issues prescribed for the plebiscite. France had abandoned all hope of the region voting to be attached to France, but, in order to try to persuade people to vote for the *status quo*, the French Government were not only conducting an active campaign against Hitlerite Germany, but were seeking to substitute a plan not provided for in the Treaty, viz., the temporary continuance of the international *régime* with a view to a later decision by the inhabitants, when France hoped that changes would have taken place in the internal government of Germany.

3. His Excellency explained that he was not delivering to His Majesty's Government any formal note, but for convenience he handed to me a document which developed some of the above points. A translation of it is annexed.

4. I reminded the German Ambassador that a special meeting of the Council of the League was about to take place which would be attended by representatives of His Majesty's Government, when some of these matters might be expected to be considered. I therefore did not feel that it would be right to pronounce upon them individually. In the meantime, the one essential thing was for everybody who could exert any influence in any quarter to exert it so as to secure the peaceful and orderly carrying out of the plebiscite. I had emphasised, in my statement in the House of Commons on November 5th,<sup>3</sup> that the responsibility for maintaining order in the Saar basin continued to be successfully discharged by the Governing Commission and I had sought and obtained assurances from both the German and the French Governments which were valuable contributions towards the continuation of this state of affairs. When the French Ambassador saw me on October 30th<sup>4</sup> he had referred to the question whether, if the Council of the League called upon France to restore order in that region, French troops would be ready to do so, and he had indicated that any necessary plans had been made. But I had then expressed to M. Corbin the earnest hope that nothing of the sort would ever be called for. The French Government had within the last few days issued an official statement that in fact they had made no special dispositions, and we should exert our own influence impartially to restrain anything which might be calculated to increase the tension. While it was necessary to contemplate the serious consequences of a breakdown in the

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 169, note 5.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 157.

Saar Administration, this was the very last thing which anyone desired, and I trusted that every possible influence would be exerted on all sides to limit this possibility.<sup>5</sup>

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

ENCLOSURE IN No. 178

*Note communicated by the German Ambassador*

*Translation*

The French Government are endeavouring to substantiate their military measures with arguments of international law, whereby certain resolutions of the League of Nations Council in 1925 and 1926<sup>6</sup> might afford the French Government a basis for a military occupation of the Saar Territory. In opposition to this the following has to be stated: Not a single word of the Treaty of Versailles contemplated the possibility of the occupation of the Saar Territory by foreign troops. In view of this fact the Council of the League of Nations made efforts from 1920 to 1930, in more than fifteen resolutions, to withdraw the French troops who had marched into the Saar at the end of the war. In the spring of 1926, when Germany was not yet a member of the League of Nations, Monsieur Rault, the then French President of the Governing Commission, certainly arrogated to himself the right, appealing to article 33 of the Saar Statute, to call on military forces outside the Saar Territory on his own sole responsibility should certain circumstances arise. It is the case that unfortunately the Council, in its resolution of March 18th, 1926, did not formally contest this view, but at least it limited itself in its decision to stating that the entry of foreign troops could only be contemplated for the purpose of protecting the supply lines of the French Rhineland army. But even for this protective service did the Council of the League refrain at a later date from calling upon French formations, and instead created an international railway protection corps, which was dissolved on the cessation of the occupation of the Rhineland. There has never been any further question of the possibility of recourse to French troops in all the resolutions of the Council of the League of Nations in which Germany has taken part. Had there been at that time even the shadow of such a possibility, the German Government would naturally have demanded that the last doubt in such respect should be eliminated. It is therefore at all events clear that the original resolutions of the Council of the League of Nations, whatever their intention was, have been swamped by later developments and have become of no effect.

Moreover there is probably no tribunal in the world which would declare it permissible that the final and decisive stage of the plebiscite should take

<sup>5</sup> Sir J. Simon gave an account of this interview with Herr von Hoesch to the French Ambassador on November 13. He said that Herr von Ribbentrop, Herr Hitler's Commissioner for Disarmament Questions who was visiting England, November 9-27, had that morning repeated the assurance that no German 'Putsch' need be contemplated as possible. M. Corbin said that 'the French were most anxious that there should be no outside intervention from any quarter, and the last thing they wanted was themselves to be required to intervene'.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 128, note 2.



place under the bayonets of a power which has an interest in the result. The very fact that such a possibility is even mooted, and even more the preparations for an entry of troops, are calculated to have an alarming effect in the Saar Territory, to fill the minds of the population with the utmost disquiet and thereby to endanger tranquillity. In the view of the German Government it is an absolutely impossible state of affairs that the sword of Damocles in the shape of a French incursion should now be suspended over the Saar Territory.

No. 179

*Mr. Hadow<sup>1</sup> (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 15)*

*No. 221 [R 6389/37/3]*

VIENNA, November 12, 1934

Sir,

Recent despatches from this post<sup>2</sup> have reported in detail certain aspects of the present situation which it may be convenient to recapitulate briefly.

2. Efforts to secure the cooperation of the Socialist population are at a standstill owing to Heimwehr opposition and to unwise increase of working hours combined with decreased wages.

3. The Jewish population is upset and anxious; its livelihood threatened by religious bigotry in the Municipality and racial hatred in the Heimwehr.

4. Expenditure is exceeding income owing largely to excessive allotment of Government monies to the maintenance of political auxiliaries inimical to each other and at the beck and call of the chiefs to whom alone they owe allegiance.

5. The regular Army is being increased by at least one-third and rearmament of all regular or auxiliary forces is proceeding apace, without apparent heed to the expenditure involved.

6. Corruption, if not proven, is widely believed to have increased very materially since Parliament disappeared; political preferment and favouritism are in daily evidence in every walk of life.

7. Prince Starhemberg is at odds with the Christian-Social leaders in the Coalition owing to his desire to control education—on the Fascist model—and the equal determination of the Roman Catholic Church to keep this important source of future influence in its own hands.

8. While he attacks in public National-Socialism, this temperamental Princeling, whose wish is to emulate Signor Mussolini, speaks privately with unwilling admiration of Hitlerism as a force which has come to stay.

9. It is commonly believed that the Heimwehr will shortly break a lance with the Christian-Social wing of the present Coalition, in an endeavour to wrest the Chancellorship from Dr. von Schuschnigg and instal Colonel

<sup>1</sup> First Secretary in H.M. Legation at Vienna, acting as Chargé d'Affaires.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Nos. 126 and 139.

Adam<sup>3</sup> in his place. Consequently both sides are flirting with the Pan-Germans.

10. Of these tendencies the most serious, to my mind, are corruption or recklessness in high places and an increasing disregard of budget appropriations or national income. For against inflation or economic difficulties of any magnitude Italy is no bulwark; and on Italy the whole Austrian economic and political structure leans heavily to-day.

11. Neither Great Britain nor France could presumably come to the rescue of Austria with another large loan (such as the Heimwehr have already suggested asking for if they are to hold the fort against Germany); even though the guaranteed loan commitments [*sic*] of this country would, in case of an Austrian default, fall largely upon the shoulders of His Majesty's Government and of the French Government. Yet allied refusal or inability so to afford financial help would leave Austria the alternatives of gradual bankruptcy or coming to terms with Germany. I know of no Austrian politician or leader who, with public opinion behind him, would not take the latter course.

12. It may therefore be asked whether Great Britain and France would not do well to consent to an Italian effort to obtain from Germany—while yet that country is sore afflicted with financial cares and uncertain even of the outcome of the Saar plebiscite—at least an open recognition of the territorial integrity of Austria?

13. As long ago as October the Italian Press, if correctly reported here, suggested that Germany was prepared, through Italy, to offer a ten-year non-aggression pact to Austria.<sup>4</sup> The wish may, in Italian minds, have been father to the thought.

14. There are also grounds for believing that, given a face-saving line of approach through Italy, the German Government would not be averse to making an agreement with Austria similar to the Polish-German Non-Aggression Pact,<sup>5</sup> which, in all three countries, could be interpreted as 'Peace with Honour' and, by the political *détente* produced, would assist materially in easing a political and economic situation which, for Austria if not for the peace of Europe, seems fraught with increasing danger.<sup>6</sup>

15. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin.

I have, &c.,  
R. H. HADOW

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 139.

<sup>5</sup> Of January 26, 1934; cf. No. 1, note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, paragraph 10.

<sup>6</sup> In a minute of November 20 on this letter, Mr. Gallop wrote that Mr. Hadow's last three paragraphs appeared 'to be founded on the false assumption that it only requires our and France's consent for the Austrian situation to be shelved for ten years', a suggestion that was 'remote from reality'. Mr. O'Malley, head of the Southern Department, added on November 23: 'One of the many advantages which despatches have over private letters . . . is that one is under no obligation to reply. It seems a pity to neglect that advantage in this case.' No reply was sent.

No. 180

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 14, 9 a.m.)*  
*No. 238 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7629/20/18]*

BERLIN, November 13, 1934

By way of counter-blast to British press statements that Germany is re-arming, the German press yesterday and today publishes a variety of rumours under startling headlines.

The 'Börsen Zeitung' is the worst offender. Under the heading 'Military Agreement, Paris-London-Brussels' it quotes a statement by the 'Paris-Midi' to the effect that England, France and Belgium have now concluded a military and air agreement. Reuter's démenti is published under the heading 'As one might expect'.

The 'Völkische Beobachter', under the heading 'Armistice Day in England', publishes a British press statement to the effect that the Vickers works at Crayford spent the day<sup>1</sup> working overtime on an ammunition contract for a foreign government. Other newspapers publish the same report minus the explanation that the contract was foreign.

Speeches by General Smuts<sup>2</sup> are widely reported and unfavourably commented on. This evening the 'Berliner Tageblatt' reminds the General that he put his signature to the Treaty of Versailles which he would now gladly disown and that he played a disastrous part in the Reparations controversy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> November 11.

<sup>2</sup> General Smuts, at that time Minister of Justice and Deputy Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, visited Great Britain from October 4 to November 14. His speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs on November 12, 1934, is printed in *The Times*, November 13, pp. 15-16. He had been a representative of the Union of South Africa at the Paris Peace Conference and Prime Minister from August 1919 to June 1924.

<sup>3</sup> For General Smuts's attitude towards reparations see W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force 1919-1950* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 131-8.

No. 181

*Memorandum by Mr. Wigram*  
*[C 7656/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 13, 1934

The Lord Privy Seal received Herr von Ribbentropp<sup>1</sup> [*sic*] on November 12th at the request of the German Embassy.

Herr von Ribbentropp said that he was very glad of the opportunity to have this personal conversation with Mr. Eden. He had been very much disappointed at the failure to reach agreement about disarmament in the Spring, when the German and British points of view had seemed so close. Herr von

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 178, note 5.

Ribbentropp thought that the breakdown of the negotiations had been due to the French, who were never satisfied with their security and who did not want to disarm.

Herr von Ribbentropp thought that it was time to have talks with the British Government. Mr. Eden asked on what subject; and Herr von Ribbentropp said disarmament. There ought to be a German-British agreement. Everybody in Germany wanted disarmament; and if disarmament was not possible, a limitation of armaments; but there were always the French, who seemed to block the way. The Germans naturally wanted equality in armaments.

Herr von Ribbentropp was now going to Scotland on a private visit for a few days; then he would go to Paris and get in touch with the new French Government; and then, if Mr. Eden allowed him, he would come back to London for a further conversation with him. Mr. Eden said that he was, of course, always very pleased to see Herr von Ribbentropp.

Herr von Ribbentropp said that he wanted to talk very frankly with Mr. Eden about the question of disarmament. He had assured Mr. Eden how anxious the German people and the German Government and Herr Hitler himself were for an agreement about disarmament, or at any rate about the limitation of armaments. What was Mr. Eden's personal view of the reason why agreement could not be reached?

Mr. Eden replied that the French were certainly frightened by the German demand for rearmament and for a very considerable rearmament at that. The publication of the German armament budgetary figures, in particular, in April had given them a shock. Public opinion in this country had already been shocked by the withdrawal of Germany from the League; and when there seemed to be a chance that the French might find some satisfaction in the proposed Eastern Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, the German Government had seen objections to that also.

Herr von Ribbentropp said that he would reflect on these matters and when he had been to Paris, he would come back and see Mr. Eden again.

Mr. Eden said that it would be necessary to tell the Press something about this meeting, for they were all very much interested. He did not think it could be said that any new fact had emerged from the discussion which had taken place; and it would be best to tell the Press so. Herr von Ribbentropp agreed that this was all that could be done.

Herr von Ribbentropp saw the Secretary of State on November 13th: again no new fact emerged from the discussion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Herr von Ribbentrop's account of these conversations is printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 333.

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Ovey (Brussels)**No. 597 [C 7658/20/18]*FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 13, 1934*

Sir,

Baron de Cartier<sup>1</sup> informed me to-day that he had been summoned to Brussels by M. Jaspar for a conference on Thursday.<sup>2</sup> The Belgian Ambassador to France would also be there. The Belgian Government were extremely anxious about the situation in Europe and feared the possibility of some sudden attack on the part of Germany. He referred to the information which M. Silvercruys<sup>3</sup> gave to Mr. Wigram earlier in the day as to the presence of German troops in the demilitarised zone,<sup>4</sup> had we any news from Paris on this or similar subjects? I said that we had no recent news on such a point. The Ambassador explained the fears of his Government by saying that we must not suppose that in any future attack there would be the warning implied by an elaborate mobilisation. It might be that the assault would come without any warning at all, first by bombing from the air which would wipe out whole cities, and then by the sudden action of a limited number of trained troops.

2. I asked Mr. Sargent to join in the conversation in view of the gravity of its character and of the Ambassador's desire to learn of our latest information. We told the Ambassador that we had no information to confirm these fears of immediate danger. Indeed, we understood that the heads of the Reichswehr were, on military grounds, wholly opposed to any idea of an immediate offensive, as it could only end in Germany's discomfiture. The views and intentions of the political leaders of Germany were more difficult to estimate, but the influence of the Reichswehr in restraining impetuous folly was great and perhaps was all the greater because the last German elections had shown a minority of four million votes actually cast against Hitler.

3. The Ambassador promised to let me know what he learned in Brussels upon his return to London.

I am, &amp;c.,

JOHN SIMON

<sup>1</sup> Belgian Ambassador at London.<sup>2</sup> November 15.<sup>3</sup> Counsellor of the Belgian Embassy, London.

<sup>4</sup> A Belgian Government's note of November 12 to this effect had been presented to Mr. Wigram by M. Silvercruys: the last sentence of the note read: 'Cet ensemble peut, incontestablement, servir de base à la constitution d'une armée de couverture non négligeable, susceptible de faciliter une invasion brusquée.'

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*<sup>1</sup>

*No. 214 Telegraphic [C 7676/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 14, 1934, 4.30 p.m.*

In reply to a question in the House of Commons today<sup>2</sup> the Lord Privy Seal made the following statement:—

‘At the request of the German Embassy arrangements were made for Herr von Ribbentrop to see my right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, and myself. These interviews took place accordingly at the Foreign Office yesterday and on Monday.<sup>3</sup> Nothing, however, transpired beyond a friendly conversation: no new proposals were put forward and no fresh developments arose out of the interviews.’

In reply to another question<sup>2</sup> as to whether he had seen a report that the nature and object of such rearmament as is proceeding in Germany was discussed at these meetings, Mr. Eden replied in the affirmative. ‘It has no foundation and no such statements as those alleged were made. These interviews did not go beyond the limits explained in my answer and I should deprecate their being given a political significance which they did not merit.’<sup>4</sup>

Full record of interview follows in my despatch No. 1256.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An identical telegram was addressed to Sir G. Clerk (Paris) as No. 152, Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) as No. 63, and Sir W. Erskine (Warsaw) as No. 67.

<sup>2</sup> See 293 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 1938–9.

<sup>3</sup> November 12.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times* of November 14 included the statement that Herr von Ribbentrop ‘is understood to have explained to Sir John Simon, as also to Mr. Eden, the nature of such rearmament as is proceeding in Germany, and to have stated emphatically that it had no aggressive purpose. It is being carried out in fulfilment of the Chancellor’s openly proclaimed decision to furnish Germany with defensive arms up to her requirements.’ In a minute of the same date Mr. Wigram said that this meant ‘that the Secy of State and Mr. Eden listened to an exposition of Germany’s rearmament in defiance of the treaty without comment. This is exactly what we know the Germans to be trying to bring about: and I submit that it is essential to contradict this flatly in the question this afternoon.’ In a further minute (undated, but evidently of November 14), Mr. Wigram wrote, ‘*The Times*, in reply to an enquiry from the News Dept., stated that this informat[i]on had been obtained from the German Emb[ass]y: and this is characteristic, as the French and Polish Embassies warned me yesterday that the German object was to get us to make an enquiry of them as to the state of their armaments. In reply they w[ou]ld tell us frankly that they had rearmed and then they hoped that we wld be so embarrassed that we wld return no answer and thereby tacitly recognize their rearmament.’

<sup>5</sup> Of November 14, not printed, forwarding to Berlin a copy of No. 181. Copies of No. 181 were sent at the same time to Paris, Brussels, and Warsaw, in despatches Nos. 1718, 596, and 448 respectively.

**No. 184**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 15, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 243 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7677/74/18]*

BERLIN, November 14, 1934

I am reliably informed that official circles here are disturbed by reports from the Saar that Germany's prospects are not so good as was first imagined. A hostile vote of 30% is now apprehended. Chancellor has just returned and taken up the Saar question vigorously. He hoped by pressure on the Catholic church here to improve his prospects at the plebiscite: this pressure consists in threatening reprisals against the church after vote in case that should be hostile to himself.

**No. 185**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 154 Telegraphic [C 7725/74/18]*

*Important*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 15, 1934, 3.15 p.m.

My telegram to Rome No. 351.<sup>1</sup>

You should at once inform the Quai d'Orsay unofficially of my communication to Signor Aloisi and explain that I have taken this action before the meeting of the Council because I wished both the French government and Signor Aloisi to know before the Council what is my present view as regards some of the matters which are being considered by the Committee of Three.

Looking at the whole of this question from the point of view of political expediency we feel that it is ultimately in the interests of Europe, and of France in particular, that the Saar problem should be eliminated as soon as possible by its complete and definite reversion to Germany, and that therefore any attempt to bring about a vote in favour of the maintenance of the present régime is to be deprecated, since it would only keep open a festering wound in the centre of Europe. I leave it to your discretion to make this point to the Quai d'Orsay as you see fit.

Repeated to Geneva No. 97 and Rome No. 352.

<sup>1</sup> No. 186 below.

**No. 186**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*  
*No. 351 Telegraphic [C 7725/74/18]*

*Important*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 15, 1934, 4.25 p.m.

I have been anxiously and carefully considering with my advisers some of the questions which suggest themselves from a study of the Saar Annex in

relation to the arrangements now being made for the plebiscite.<sup>1</sup> Some of these questions are in particular formulated or suggested in the French memorandum<sup>2</sup> which has also been carefully studied here.

2. I am inclined to take the view, on examining the text of the Annex, that the scheme therein contained does not contemplate a second plebiscite but on the contrary is based upon the view that if, after examining the results of the voting, the League of Nations decides in favour of the maintenance of the international régime, this decision will operate permanently. I am advised that this conclusion is strongly supported by the references in paragraph (a) of Article 35 of the Annex to the adaptation of the régime when definitively adopted to the permanent welfare of the territory. It would plainly be impossible to qualify a decision in favour of Germany by providing for a second plebiscite ten years later when the inhabitants of the Saar might opt for separating themselves from the Reich. Why then should such a qualification be permissible in the case of a decision in favour of the maintenance of the League of Nations régime? No event in history can be regarded as settling matters for all eternity, but as far as the language of the Annex is concerned, I am convinced that one plebiscite is contemplated and no more.

3. An equally serious question is whether it would be proper for the Council, before the voting takes place, to issue a statement describing what, in their view, would be the alterations in the existing government of the Saar which would or might be brought about provided that as the result of the voting the existing régime is perpetuated. There is nothing in the Annex, so far as I can see, to prohibit such an announcement in terms, but the difficulty I feel arises from the dual character in which the Council acts. On the one hand it is charged with the duty of conducting the plebiscite, and as such must of course act with complete impartiality. It is not entitled, for example, to issue a preliminary warning of the dangers of voting in favour of union with either of the countries named, nor one describing the benefits which would flow from such a choice. How then can it, in view of its duty of complete impartiality, make an announcement as to future prospects if the international régime persists which, whether it intends it or not, will be everywhere regarded as designed to influence the voters to vote in one particular way? It is quite true that the Council also has a second function, viz. that of ultimately deciding if the Saar vote is in favour of the maintenance of the present régime what adaptation in the existing régime is needed to promote the permanent welfare of the territory. There may be nothing in the Annex to say when this should be discussed and decided and in that sense it is not contrary to the Annex to discuss and announce it before the plebiscite. But the fact remains that the Council which is responsible hereafter for deciding, in one event only, as to the future methods of government in the Saar, is also the Council responsible for impartially conducting the plebiscite. I cannot therefore doubt that grave objection would be raised to this moment being chosen for such an announcement.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 166, and especially note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Of August 31; cf. No. 75, note 16.



4. I need hardly say that these considerations would not apply to any solution of these questions which was the result of agreement with the French and German governments.

5. As regards the proposal to establish something in the nature of a system of minority protection (as distinct from the amnesty proposals), the suggestion has been made that if the Germans are not prepared to agree to the establishment of such a system, the Council has power to impose it upon them under paragraph 39 of the Saar Annex. I am advised that the powers of the Council under that paragraph do not go so far, but the important question is not what I think, but the attitude of the Germans. If they take the line that the Council has in law no such power, they will presumably decline to abide by the provisions imposed by the Council, and the minority would, in fact, receive no protection. It seems to me, therefore, most important that the legal point should be decided forthwith in a manner which, if possible, would bind Germany, and would at any rate place the Council on as firm ground as possible. I think therefore, that if the Germans refuse to accept any proposals about minority protection put forward by the Committee, they should be asked to agree that the question whether the Council has power to impose such a system should be referred to the Permanent Court for an advisory opinion which both the Council and Germany would accept. If the Germans refuse this, it would seem the best course for the Council at once to obtain an advisory opinion from the Court. It seems to me that there is no prospect of assuring any minority protection unless either the Germans have agreed to it, or it has been definitely decided that the Council has the legal power to impose it, and it is for this reason that I have made the above observations.

6. You should take steps to convey these views at once and unofficially to Signor Aloisi in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee of Three by whatever channel you think most appropriate. You should explain to him that I thought it right to inform him of the views at which I have arrived now rather than to run the risk of an unfortunate controversy at Geneva, but it goes without saying that the ultimate decision of His Majesty's Representative at Geneva will be arrived at after fully considering the recommendations of the Committee of Three.

I am instructing His Majesty's Ambassador to inform the French government unofficially of what you are doing in Rome, but I think it would be advisable also for you to tell the French representative who I understand is negotiating with the Committee of Three.

Repeated to Paris No. 153 and Geneva No. 96.

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 16)*  
*No. 314 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7702/74/18]*

PARIS, November 15, 1934

As I had yesterday to participate in the annual shoot given at Rambouillet by the President of the Republic to Ambassadors, His Majesty's Minister<sup>1</sup> saw M. Léger on my behalf and enquired what had occurred at the recent interviews which the German Ambassador had had with M. Laval.<sup>2</sup>

2. M. Léger replied that M. Laval, in the course of two meetings, the first of which had taken place at his request in consequence of the harm that was being done by the German press campaign about the employment of French troops during the plebiscite, had told the Ambassador:

that France undertook to take no action of any kind except in conformity with her treaty obligations;

that if there were any conflicts as to the correct interpretation of those obligations the French Government would refuse to discuss it anywhere except at Geneva;

that not a French soldier had been moved, and that all that had occurred was that plans had been prepared against the event, which the French Government sincerely hoped would not arise, of the Governing Commission calling on them for assistance;

that if, unfortunately, the event did arise the French Government undertook to employ in the first instance nothing but police ('gardes mobiles') and that they would only send troops in the very last resort if the available police forces had been exhausted and further reinforcements were called for.

3. Herr Koester at the second interview had contested the right of French troops to enter the Saar in any circumstances on the ground that German sovereignty was still in being. M. Laval had replied that, as he had already stated, the French Government would not discuss interpretations of that kind except at Geneva, but he would tell the Ambassador personally that he must reject the German thesis as quite untenable. Under the Treaty of Versailles Germany had agreed to sovereignty being transferred pending the result of the plebiscite to the League of Nations, and that, even if it were contended that German sovereignty had not been abandoned but was merely in suspense, and therefore still in existence as the overriding sovereignty, the fact remained that Germany had agreed to all rights and obligations flowing from sovereignty being assumed by the League.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. R. H. Campbell.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 178. For Herr Koester's reports on his conversations with M. Laval on November 7 and 9, see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 307 and 320.

<sup>3</sup> The French Embassy in London communicated to the Foreign Office on November 12 a memorandum dated November 10 which gave a briefer version of the above-mentioned interviews. In a minute dated November 13 attached to this memorandum Mr. Wigram wrote: 'The point of this is that the French General Staff seem to have frightened the French

4. Mr. Campbell took the opportunity to say that he thought that British public opinion would hope to see the Saar question liquidated as quickly as possible after the plebiscite and would be unsympathetic to action by either party tending to prolong the agony. M. Léger said that a rapid settlement was the aim also of the French Government who would do their utmost within reason to promote it. These matters should be under discussion at the moment in Rome under the auspices of Baron Aloisi's committee. Unfortunately, the German representatives had refused for a while to negotiate under what they were pleased to call the menace of French troops.<sup>4</sup> They had now dropped that line but had raised another difficulty in declining to open discussions on any basis other than that of a 100% return to Germany. The French representatives had been told to insist that the discussions must also take account of the other eventualities provided for by the Treaty.

5. M. Léger again confirmed the intention of the French Government to insist at the forthcoming special session of the Council on the international character of any operation undertaken on an appeal from the Governing Commission. He thought the risk of such appeal being made was small, especially after the calming effect produced by your recent declaration.<sup>5</sup> Small as it was, it none the less existed, and the French Government were intensely alarmed at the possibility of it materialising. They would infinitely prefer to have nothing whatever to do with it, and that any forces that might have to be employed should be drawn solely from other nationalities. As that however was impossible they would fulfil their responsibilities if absolutely necessary, but they must insist on the international character of any such operation being marked by some means or another.<sup>6</sup>

Govt. out of sending troops—now it is *police* who are promised, probably a few “gardes mobiles” will mature with luck if there is trouble.’ Mr. Sargent wrote: ‘I am afraid this climb-down on the part of the French, coupled with the “Daily Mail” campaign in this country, may have revived the possibility of a Putsch.’ These minutes were initialled by Mr. Eden (November 14).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 174.

<sup>5</sup> A reference to Sir J. Simon's statement in the House of Commons on November 5; cf. No. 169, note 5.

<sup>6</sup> The remainder of this conversation between Mr. Campbell and M. Léger was concerned with Franco-Italian and Franco-Yugoslav relations and was reported in Paris telegram No. 315 Saving of November 15, not printed. Mr. Campbell reported that ‘M. Léger remarked once again [cf. No. 160] that the French government would conclude no agreement with Italy unless Yugoslavia could be associated with it in some way’.

## No. 188

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 16)*

*No. 1750 [C 7721/247/18]*

*Confidential*

PARIS, November 15, 1934

Sir,

With reference to Mr. Campbell's despatch No. 1709<sup>1</sup> of November 7th regarding the Eastern Pact negotiations, I have the honour to state that I

<sup>1</sup> No. 176.

caused enquiry to be made at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to-day whether any information could be given me in regard to M. Laval's recent conversation with the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires on the subject beyond what had appeared in the press.<sup>2</sup>

2. The Political Director stated that there was always danger that the Soviets, if repulsed, might fall back on other political combinations, although he believed that Stalin<sup>3</sup> had now become more convinced of the expediency of the Litvinov policy of rapprochement with the Western Powers. On the other hand, there was also the persistent desire of Litvinov to conclude a bilateral arrangement with France which the French Government had always been anxious to avoid. In receiving M. Rosenberg, therefore, M. Laval had sought to impress upon him that the death of M. Barthou had introduced no change in the French policy of pursuing the Pact proposals, and that he was shortly going to resume negotiations with Poland on the subject.

3. M. Bargeton went on to say that the French reply to the Polish memorandum was, in fact, now being drafted and would shortly be despatched. A copy would be communicated confidentially to His Majesty's Government in due course.<sup>4</sup> The reply would readily admit the Polish point regarding the importance of Germany being a party, but it would suggest that it was equally desirable that Poland and France should, meanwhile, reach agreement on outstanding points in the hope of eventual German accession. M. Bargeton mentioned that a point of some difficulty was the Polish requirement that the Polish-German Declaration<sup>5</sup> should be expressly reaffirmed in the pact. The Polish-German Declaration contained a definite obligation of non-recourse to force and this might be difficult to square with the obligation of mutual assistance contained in the pact.

4. M. Bargeton stated in conclusion that the French Government hoped that by prolonging negotiations with the Polish Government it would be possible to defer a resumption of discussion with Germany until after the Saar plebiscite. In the meanwhile the Soviet Government would also be kept quiet and reassured.

I have, &c.,  
GEORGE R. CLERK

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Times*, November 14 (p. 14), where it was stated that the interview between M. Laval and M. Rosenberg on November 12 'is believed to mark the resumption of active negotiations for an East European security pact'.

<sup>3</sup> Secretary-General of the Communist party of the Soviet Union.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. R. H. Campbell transmitted to the Foreign Office a copy of the text of the French reply, dated November 26, in his despatch No. 1824 of November 29. An English translation of the reply is printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, pp. 715-19.

<sup>5</sup> Of January 26, 1934; cf. No. 1, note 5.

No. 189

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 16,<sup>1</sup> 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 124 Telegraphic [C 7762/74/18]*

*Confidential*

PARIS, November 16, 1934, 12 midnight

Having to conduct President of the Republic round British stands at opening of Air Exhibition<sup>2</sup> and to lunch with the Prime Minister I was only able to see Minister for Foreign Affairs for a few moments before lunch and had not time for serious discussion of your communication to Baron Aloisi<sup>3</sup> but Minister for Foreign Affairs made one important observation.

He said French Government would like to see a big minority vote as that would show the world at large that in a country which was hundred per cent German there were many who did not hold with Herr Hitler's régime and chances of such vote would be greatly increased if voters felt there was a possibility of status quo being maintained for say ten years after which there would be another plebiscite when Herr Hitler's régime might have lapsed or been so modified that today's dis[s]ident voters could vote wholeheartedly for reunion with Germany. Per contra if voters felt this was to be the one and only plebiscite they would vote for reunion with Germany and so give Herr Hitler a false but glowing testimonial to his virtues. None the less the French Government were so determined to give no handle for any accusation of incorrect behaviour that they would not lift a finger to influence voters.

In other words although M. Laval stated with emphasis that policy of France remained the same though Foreign Ministers changed I take it that he has dropped M. Barthou's idea of putting advantages of maintaining status quo before Saar voters.

<sup>1</sup> Presumably in error for '17'.

<sup>2</sup> On November 16.

<sup>3</sup> No. 186.

No. 190

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 17, 11 a.m.)*  
*No. 244 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7769/20/18]*

*Very confidential*

BERLIN, November 16, 1934

The following is disarmament or rather rearmament position here based on replies to questions put to a German high official. It must be treated as highly confidential.

Reorganisation of army is now proceeding apace and time is not far distant when figures outlined in German proposals of December 18th<sup>1</sup> will have been achieved.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the German Government's reply to the French Government's *aide mémoire* of December 13, 1933, on disarmament; see Volume VI, No. 143, enclosures 1 and 2.

Baron von Neurath, Buelow and other officials of Ministry are apprehensive of a joint démarche by Versailles signatories at some future date. France and England, they argue, are well informed as to extent of German rearmament and will not remain passive indefinitely. Ministry of War on the other hand favours rapid advance so long as there is no intervention. Question of policy to be pursued by Germany therefore arises. Both Blomberg and Hitler agree that awkward situation would occur: (a) if Versailles Powers accused Germany of violating Treaty; (b) if Germany intimated that she had anticipated convention.

A further difficulty arises because Goering, against the advice of the Army Command has ignored Articles 34 and 35 of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Draft Convention<sup>2</sup> and constructed bombing aeroplanes. As to Article 37 or other articles of chapter 3 of draft, informant did not know the position reached.

Both Reichswehr and Ministry of Foreign Affairs are at present disposed to advise the Chancellor who is prepared to act as they think fit—to resume disarmament conversations after the Saar plebiscite. The army are therefore most anxious that no conflict should arise in connexion with the Saar.

Ribbentrop's Mission to London<sup>3</sup> is broadly speaking to ascertain British attitude to present stage of German rearmament, to tranquillize British opinion and of course to give warning to Berlin of possible danger.

Informant who takes an objective view, thought next French Government would be wise to resume negotiations and call a halt before Nazis realise their strength and flout foreign opinion entirely: he genuinely deplores probability of re-awakening of German militarism and undue military influence over the Chancellor.

<sup>2</sup> Of March 16, 1933; cf. No. 48, note 4. Chapter 3 of Section II (i.e. Articles 34-41) of the Draft Convention dealt with Air Armaments.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 181.

## No. 191

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 17, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 125 Telegraphic [C 7767/74/18]*

PARIS, November 17, 1934, 12.5 a.m.

Your telegram No. 154.<sup>1</sup>

Communication was made this afternoon to Political Director and Monsieur Massigli together, and after brief introduction in the sense of paragraph 2, Aide-Mémoire was handed to them in terms of paragraphs 1 to 5 of your telegram 351<sup>2</sup> to Rome.

2. Monsieur Bargeton and Monsieur Massigli were sparing of their observations. They were inclined to take the line that French views had already been expressed in memorandum of August 31st<sup>3</sup> while those of

<sup>1</sup> No. 185.

<sup>2</sup> No. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 75, note 16.

His Majesty's Government had now been embodied in your communication to Baron Aloisi, that Committee of Three would take both into account in preparing its report and that no very useful purpose would be served by discussing any of these questions until report was available. It was explained to Monsieur Bargeton and Monsieur Massigli that your object in informing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of your communication to Baron Aloisi was precisely to give them advance knowledge of its contents and thus diminish risk of unfortunate controversy [*sic*] at Geneva. They refused however to be drawn and only observation which they made of any note was on minor points on which they maintain that it was really impossible to legislate in advance of Plebiscite in as much as problem would be totally different according to result of vote. Arrangements applicable to a 40% for maintenance of status quo would not be appropriate to a 5% vote. There was a risk, they went on, amounting to strong probability that either just before or during Plebiscite there might be heavy exodus of voters streaming over French frontier. If so what were French Government to do with these people? It was a distribution problem which was causing them very serious anxiety. Neither Monsieur Bargeton nor Monsieur Massigli showed any very evident signs of disappointment on reading memorandum and it is possible that though they do not like to admit it French views have undergone some modification since memorandum of August 31st was issued. I have some reason to believe that Monsieur Laval is more moderate than Monsieur Barthou on these questions.

3. Monsieur Massigli said he had just heard from Rome that the Germans were now discussing things in a reasonable spirit. He also said he had reason to believe that Baron Aloisi's report which would be basis for discussion in Council would be very cautious (prudent).

Repeated to Rome and Geneva.

## No. 192

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 17, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 349 Telegraphic [R 6439/37/3]*

ROME, November 17, 1934, 12.20 a.m.

My telegram No. 321<sup>1</sup> and your telegram No. 333.<sup>2</sup>

In a confidential letter<sup>3</sup> addressed to me by Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in reply to one I wrote to him dated October 20th,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 143.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.*, note 8.

<sup>3</sup> Dated November 16.

<sup>4</sup> This letter to Signor Suvich had been sent after the receipt of Foreign Office telegram No. 333 of October 19. In a letter of November 10 to Mr. O'Malley, Mr. Nichols, First Secretary in H.M. Embassy at Rome, explained that the delay in reply was due to the loss of the original letter. Two days earlier Signor Suvich's private secretary had asked for a copy and said 'that this was not a Machiavellian manoeuvre to gain time but it really was the fact that he had searched everywhere and it could not be found'. Mr. Nichols added: 'I quite believe him, and trust that we shall not have to wait much longer for the assurance we want.'

Signor Suvich after reference to September declaration<sup>5</sup> informs me that Italian Government attaches the greatest importance to a community of views and of action in regard to Austrian problem and that this criterion as he terms it naturally applies to Italian-Austrian relations.

Copies of correspondence<sup>6</sup> goes to you by bag tomorrow.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 124, note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Received in the Foreign Office on November 20 as enclosures in Rome despatch No. 988 of November 17, not printed. No further instructions on this matter appear to have been given to Sir E. Drummond.

### No. 193

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 17, 4.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 350 Telegraphic [C 7770/74/18]*

ROME, November 17, 1934, 4.35 p.m.

Baron Aloisi told me that German experts who had come here for discussion of financial question with regard to the Saar had shown themselves only ready to consider minor points. They had no instructions on major ones. The suggestion had been made by financial sub-committee that because of the attitude of the German experts that committee should proceed to unilateral recommendations. Baron Aloisi had adjourned the meeting and had today sent for the German Ambassador and put the greatest pressure on him that proper instructions or more authoritative representatives should now be sent to Rome from Berlin. He had laid stress on the political importance to Germany of these discussions. He had reason to hope that his strong remonstrances would not be without effect but clearly it would be impossible for him to present report to Council on these financial matters within the next few days. He had therefore telegraphed to M. Benes, President of the Council, asking for adjournment of Council meeting for a week and he earnestly begged that I would request your support for his suggestion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 335. Note 2 states that Herr Hitler had given instructions, repeated on November 16, that everything should be done 'to eliminate as much as possible transitional economic difficulties and causes for political friction'.

### No. 194

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 18, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 352 Telegraphic [C 7771/74/18]*

ROME, November 17, 1934, 10.25 p.m.

I wrote and gave Baron Aloisi this morning personal letter embodying substance of your telegram No. 351.<sup>1</sup> I ran over three main points:

(a) That Saar Annex contemplates a single definite plebiscite. I gathered that Baron Aloisi shares this view.

<sup>1</sup> No. 186.



(b) Pronouncement by the Council prior to the plebiscite as to what alterations should take place in existing government of the Saar if voting should favour *status quo*. Baron Aloisi stated that Committee had confined itself to stating that if plebiscite favoured *status quo* the sovereignty of the territory would pass to the League of Nations, which would make the necessary arrangements for the future.

(c) System of minority protection. Baron Aloisi said he had discussed this matter with the German representatives. The latter had declared that they could not give any guarantee for those whom they styled 'traitors'. I gather that they apply this term to refugees from the Hitler régime who have settled recently in the Saar and were endeavouring to influence voters against German solution. Baron Aloisi had proposed, and he said idea had been sympathetically received in Berlin, that guarantee should be given only to voters and to people who had been resident in the Saar for three years. This would exclude the class to which the German government were not ready to extend protection. I enquired whether in his mind this guarantee would be effected by a unilateral German declaration. He said that his plan would be to embody it in Council report and he hoped that the Germans would pass it in silence, thereby giving their consent. In his view this was the best that could be done as no minority provision or guarantee would in fact be effective if the German government decided to persecute particular individuals. I did not enquire of him what was to happen to those people at present in the Saar who would not receive any guarantee of protection and I doubt whether he has thought out this resulting question.

I then remarked that personally I hoped that voting would be in favour of a return of the Saar to Germany, otherwise an open wound would remain in Europe. I think Baron Aloisi agreed but he enquired in his turn what would be the position if some four or five of the largest communes voted in favour of the *status quo*. I observed that this would of course complicate matters but surely much depended on size of territorial votes in this way. If such vote took place it would at any rate strengthen the hands of the Council in dealing with the question of protection of minorities. Baron Aloisi promised to study very carefully points set out in my letter. I told him that the French government had also been informed of them. I have given my French colleague a copy of letter.

Repeated to Paris and Geneva.

## No. 195

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 20, 6.30 p.m.)*  
*Nos. 248 and 249 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7833/20/18]*

BERLIN, November 19, 1934

Your despatch No. 597 (to Brussels).<sup>1</sup>

Belgian Minister tells me that information regarding presence of S.A. formations in demilitarized zone was based on figures supplied by his

<sup>1</sup> No. 182.

Military Attaché who incidentally does not believe Germany will be ready to attack for another eight years. Belgian Minister also was instructed to attend this Conference of Belgian representatives in Brussels but it has been postponed owing to Belgian ministerial crisis.<sup>2</sup> He spoke bitterly about the French General Staff who needlessly alarmed Belgian Ambassador in Paris by pretending that Germans have 100 divisions or their equivalents to place in the field now. Such exaggeration he feels only defeats its own object which is to impress Belgium with a due sense of the German military preparations.<sup>3</sup>

My Military Attaché dined last night with General von Reichenau who told him that Herr Hitler attached great importance to the Treaty of Locarno not that he entertained any illusion as to Great Britain ever actually joining with Germany in repelling a French attack on the latter but because he felt she would in case of necessity act as a brake on France if that power should ever contemplate invading the demilitarized zone. He would therefore himself respect the sanctity of that zone.

Belgian Military Attaché called on my Military Attaché this morning to discuss information contained in the above report. The former was anxious to be considered a realist and not an alarmist and he felt an alteration of final sentences of this report<sup>4</sup> had materially altered its tenour.

'After "négligeable" he had written "ultérieurement (viz. in seven or eight years) même, faudra-t-il peut-être envisager le danger d'invasion brusquée que présenterait l'existence de cette armée dans une zone réputée démilitarisée".'

Repeated to Brussels by post.

<sup>2</sup> Le Comte de Broqueville had resigned as Prime Minister on November 13. M. Theunis formed a new administration on November 19 in which M. Hymans was Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>3</sup> In a minute of November 16, Mr. Sargent wrote: 'My impression is that the real reason why the Belgian Ambassador was instructed to come and tell us how frightened his Government was of German preparations in the Rhineland was because it was hoped by this indirect method to induce His Majesty's Government to take up again the question raised by the Belgian Government last spring of a British declaration of the integrity and independence of Belgian territory.' Cf. Nos. 26 and 64.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 182, note 4.

## No. 196

*Mr. Charles (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 28)*

*No. 568 [N 6525/1/38]*

MOSCOW, November 19, 1934

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 549 of November 6th.<sup>1</sup> I have the honour to inform you that the Moscow press betrayed a certain nervousness in writing

<sup>1</sup> In this despatch, not printed, Mr. Charles reported that the anniversary of the recognition of the Soviet regime by the French Government, on October 28, 1924, had been celebrated by a number of articles in the Soviet press.

of the new French Government.<sup>2</sup> M. Flandin was described bluntly as being essentially a man of the right; and the 'Pravda' stated that he was an out-and-out supporter of 'the Fascist programme'.

2. It almost looks as if this attitude caused some apprehension in French Governmental circles; for on November 14th a 'high French authority' made to the correspondent of the 'Izvestiya' a statement, clearly intended to be of a reassuring nature, on the subject, which was published in the Moscow press on November 15. I enclose herein the translation of this message<sup>3</sup> published in the 'Moscow Daily News'. It will be seen that the French official emphasizes the fact that the new French Government contains besides M. Flandin, MM. Laval and Herriot, and that there can be no question of not continuing the policy of cooperation in the cause of peace. He goes on to point out that any efforts which M. Laval may make to bring about better relations between France and Germany should not cause alarm, but rather satisfaction, in the Soviet Union, since an improvement in these relations would help in bringing the Eastern Mutual Guarantee Pact to fruition. In any case M. Laval may be trusted to follow the policy inaugurated by M. Herriot and continued by M. Barthou, and to do all in his power to broaden and consolidate friendly relations between France and the U.S.S.R.

3. The Moscow correspondent of the 'Temps' has just returned from Paris, where he says he had two conversations with M. Laval. He has brought back the impression that feeling in France is weakening in the matter of the rapprochement with the Soviet Union, that opposition towards this country is getting stronger and that the French authorities are not pleased with the exaggerated Soviet pro-French propaganda in the Saar. He says, however, that the French Government sincerely desire to realise the Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee. It is the general opinion amongst foreigners in Moscow that the Soviet Government genuinely fear the possibility of a Franco-German *détente* and are therefore anxious lest M. Laval, who was in favour of coming to terms with Germany in the past, should pursue a policy which would lead to a real and lasting improvement in the relations between those two countries. The fear of such an eventuality may account for the desire of the Soviet Government, about which there has lately been persistent talk in Moscow, to improve official relations with Germany. The Soviet press has been studiously careful to refrain from harsh criticism of either the German or the Polish attitude towards the Eastern pact and it is undoubtedly hoped that matters will still be satisfactorily arranged. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs is even said to have aroused the displeasure of the Kremlin for the non-success of his policy up to date. A member of the staff of the French Embassy asked me yesterday whether I had heard of M. Litvinov's unpopularity in high quarters and expressed fervent hope that the rumour was without foundation.

I have, &c.,  
NOEL CHARLES

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 177, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

No. 197

*Letter from Mr. Sargent to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*  
[C 7693/20/18]

*Personal and Confidential*<sup>1</sup>

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 19, 1934*

Foreign Office despatch No. 1256<sup>2</sup> contained a record of the Secretary of State's and Eden's recent interviews with Ribbentrop; and Wigram's letter to Kirkpatrick of November 14<sup>th</sup><sup>3</sup> contained certain remarks on a recent 'Times' article<sup>4</sup> on the subject.

You will now be interested to know that the Secretary of State and Eden saw the German Ambassador on November 16<sup>th</sup> and talked to him frankly and as friends about Ribbentrop and the 'Times' article. Von Hoesch was apologetic about this which in fact came from the German Embassy, though he stated that it was not what had been said to the 'Times' correspondent. While maintaining his proper position as German Ambassador and making no criticisms, von Hoesch seemed to understand our difficulty concerning Ribbentrop; and the Secretary of State thought that he welcomed his remark that we would always speak frankly to him in the regular way.

Ribbentrop has been making an effort to see the Prime Minister; but the Secretary of State has suggested to him that he should not see him.<sup>5</sup> The Secretary of State is very alive to the possibility that if we are not careful we may be treated hereafter as having received information about German rearmament and acquiesced in it.

O. G. SARGENT

<sup>1</sup> The form of address and ending of this letter are missing on the filed copy.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 183, note 5.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed. Mr. I. A. Kirkpatrick was First Secretary in H.M. Embassy at Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 183, note 4.

<sup>5</sup> Sir J. Simon agreed to write to Mr. MacDonald to this effect on November 15; the letter was dated November 16. A note on the file stated: 'The P.M. had already decided not to see von R. H. J. S[eymour]. Nov. 15.'

No. 198

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*  
*No. 109 L.N. Telegraphic [C 7762/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 20, 1934, 10 p.m.*

Following for Mr. Eden.

Paris telegram No. 124.<sup>1</sup>

Though I hope Sir G. Clerk is right in holding that M. Laval has abandoned M. Barthou's idea of putting advantages of maintenance of 'status quo' before Saar voters, I think that it would be a good thing to reinforce what Sir G. Clerk has said to him as regards our views. If therefore you can

<sup>1</sup> No. 189.

find an opportunity while he is at Geneva, you may think it advisable to impress upon him view of His Majesty's Government as given in paragraph 2 of my telegram No. 154<sup>2</sup> and further point out to him (1) embarrassing situation in which Council would find itself in the event of any appreciable vote for the status quo at the plebiscite, and (2) what an unpleasant situation would be created for the League of Nations were it confronted in this manner with the dilemma of having either to hand over a large dissident minority to Germany or alternatively itself to administer in perpetuity a small, and almost certainly uneconomic territorial unit. Political dangers inherent in choice of this latter solution are obvious.

2. I contemplate either alternative with dismay. Surely their disadvantages greatly outweigh the advantage of any potential rebuff to Herr Hitler which M. Laval may see in a vote for the status quo. The best thing that could happen, so far as the peace of Europe is concerned, would be an overwhelming majority, and this necessarily means a majority for joining Germany.

Repeated to Paris No. 157.

<sup>2</sup> No. 185.

## No. 199

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 22)*

*No. 70 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7862/74/18]*

GENEVA, November 21, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

M. Litvinov asked to see me this afternoon and spoke first of the position in the Saar.

*Saar.* He said that Russia was not directly interested but he did not wish to see Hitler secure a great triumph. I said that I thought this unlikely in any event, since Hitler would need a 90 per cent majority for that purpose, and few people imagined he would secure such a result now. M. Litvinov replied that he did not agree. A bare majority would be a triumph for Hitler. He would have no difficulty in explaining away the figures. The return of the Saar to Germany was all that was necessary to give him a formidable success at home.

It is clear that M. Litvinov regards the future of the Saar not in the light of its reaction on European peace so much as a possible means of injuring a régime in Germany which he detests. None the less he admitted that the Council could take no initiative as regards a second vote. In his view, however, if the people of the Saar were to ask through the Governing Commission whether, if they voted for the *status quo* now they might in later years, if they wished, return to Germany, then he thought the League should give an affirmative answer.

*League and Disarmament.* M. Litvinov went on to speak of some proposals for the future of the League and of the Disarmament Conference which he had handed me last night and which I had not had time to study. He said that his purpose was to create some organisation which would give body to the spirit underlying the Kellogg Pact.<sup>1</sup> He did not think that the United States could ever join the League; but the creation of such an organisation would enable the United States to collaborate without joining the League. He had had some conversation with Mr. Roosevelt<sup>2</sup> on the subject which had been encouraging, and he had been disappointed when Mr. Wilson<sup>3</sup> had recently taken another view. In any event he was sending his proposals to Mr. Roosevelt direct 'to find out whether he still holds the view which he expressed to me', and he would let us know the outcome. Meanwhile he would be grateful if we could consider his document and let him know our views. The French original of this confidential document comes to you by bag to-night (see my despatch No. 188).<sup>4</sup>

M. Litvinov then spoke of the outlook for Europe generally. So long as the Hitler régime existed in Germany, there could be no real security for Europe. Hitler had nothing to offer his people but the prospect of military glory. His philosophy was based on 'Mein Kampf' and found expression in the militarist education in the schools in Germany. When Herr Nadolny (the German Ambassador in Moscow but since dismissed because he believed in the League and wished for a policy of rapprochement between Germany and Russia)<sup>5</sup> had tried to impress M. Litvinov with Hitler's pacific speeches, M. Litvinov had always replied, 'Why if Herr Hitler believes in peace does he still circulate his book in Germany? If it does not represent the Chancellor's views to-day, why is it not withdrawn instead of being for sale all over Germany?' Herr Nadolny had never been able to answer this. M. Litvinov did not believe in the possibility of a disarmament agreement for some years to come. The attitude of Germany and Japan made this impossible. In the

<sup>1</sup> This international treaty for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy was signed at Paris on August 27, 1928; see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 128, pp. 447 ff.

<sup>2</sup> President of the United States.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Hugh R. Wilson, United States Minister in Switzerland, was the United States representative at the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. For his account of his interview with M. Litvinov on November 20, see *F.R.U.S.* 1934, vol. i, pp. 189-91.

<sup>4</sup> Received November 22, not printed. In a minute of December 1 Mr. Eden, then in London, asked for instructions on the attitude he should take towards the Soviet proposals and suggested that it would be a help to him 'to have a copy of our [H.M.G.'s] proposed reply to Mr. Henderson [Chairman of the Disarmament Conference]'. The reference was to H.M.G.'s draft reply to the letter of June 28 sent by Mr. Henderson in execution of the resolution of the General Commission of the Disarmament Commission of June 8 relating to the proposal of the U.S.S.R. delegation that 'the Conference be declared a permanent institution under the title of the Peace Conference'; see Volume VI, No. 445. No written reply had been sent to Mr. Henderson and it was suggested, in a minute of December 3 by Mr. Stevenson, that 'Mr. Eden might give the opinion contained in the draft reply as his own'.

<sup>5</sup> Herr Nadolny was recalled from Moscow in June 1934; see Volume VII, No. 605; cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. ii, Nos. 476 and 488.

meanwhile, however, we should do all we could to organise peace. Hence the proposals which he had handed to me yesterday. . . .<sup>6</sup>

Copy to Paris. Not repeated elsewhere.

<sup>6</sup> The paragraph here omitted dealt with the naval conversations and the Far East. It will be printed in Volume XIII.

## No. 200

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 22)*

*No. 72 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7865/74/18]<sup>1</sup>*

GENEVA, November 21, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

I had a long talk with M. Laval this afternoon.

*Soviet Union.* He began by saying that he had seen M. Litvinov this morning and had received some important assurances from him. He had himself felt some anxiety that Russia might be tempted to enter into separate negotiation with Germany and equally there were Russian apprehensions that France would do so. Hitler's tactics were to try to make arrangements with one Power at a time. Now as the outcome of M. Laval's frank talk with M. Litvinov, there was an undertaking between the two that neither would enter into separate negotiation with Germany, but that each would keep the other informed of every step of any conversations that might take place. This was highly desirable as removing suspicion.

*Eastern Pact.* As to Poland, he had prepared an answer to the Polish Government's note about the Eastern Pact.<sup>2</sup> He had hoped to find M. Beck here to give him the answer verbally; but he had now gained the impression that M. Beck did not much want to see him. It would be of help if M. Beck could be induced to come to the Council. In the meanwhile the answer<sup>3</sup> would be delivered tomorrow by the French Ambassador at Warsaw. Poland had asked three things: that she should not be required to guarantee Lithuania; that she should not be required to guarantee Czechoslovakia; that she should not be asked to sign the Eastern Pact unless Germany did. As to the first M. Laval agreed that Poland should give no guarantee until she herself recognised Lithuania. As to the second France and Czechoslovakia were agreed that there should be no Polish guarantee for the latter. As to the third, Poland was to be asked to sign so that Germany's signature might be added to the document. M. Laval said he was anxious to put an end to 'la bouderie' between France and Poland. Poland must make up her mind where she stood. His answer had gone a great length to meet her objections.

<sup>1</sup> The last two sections of this telegram, dealing with Italy and Yugoslavia, are not on this file but are filed under R 6561/471/22 and R 6562/5524/92 respectively.

<sup>2</sup> For this Polish note of September 27, see No. 121, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 188, paragraph 3.

He hoped that it would yet be possible to secure Polish aid for the signature of an Eastern Pact.

*Saar. Strictly confidential.* M. Laval wished me to know that he would not have signed the French memorandum<sup>4</sup> deposited by M. Barthou. However since that document had been deposited France would certainly not go back on it. At the same time he himself did not wish for a second plebiscite. He had made this clear. M. Litvinov was much more anxious for it on account of the Communist and Jewish minority in the Saar and of his desire to see Hitler suffer a rebuff. M. Laval took a longer view and did not himself desire any such result. He had communicated to M. Litvinov the gist of our interpretation of the Saar annex.<sup>5</sup>

As to the policing of the Saar, he was going to take up a clear and he hoped a frank position at the Council. France was determined to take no step in the Saar that was not internationally sanctioned. He had no desire to send a policeman or a soldier into the Saar, and if she did so it could only be in a case of emergency because she was physically nearest to the area. M. Laval would therefore ask at the Council that if police were asked for from France in an emergency, other countries interested notably Great Britain and Italy should also send contingents however small. If Great Britain and Italy were determined not to send contingents then he hoped the Council would make it clear that they would expect France to send police only as part of an international action to meet an emergency. But France herself would not ask for this; this was a responsibility of the Council.

M. Laval then made an earnest appeal to His Majesty's Government to signify their willingness to co-operate with police should the need arise. There was no question of troops. He was himself convinced that if it were known that Italy and Great Britain would be associated in police action, were such required in an emergency, then the emergency would never arise.

M. Laval expressed his regret that the Governing Commission in recruiting their police had insisted that applicants should speak both French and German. This had inevitably limited the number of applicants, since nationals well enough educated to speak French and German, as well as their own language, were not likely to be in so humble a state of life as to wish to enlist as ordinary policemen in the Saar. If the Governing Commission had been content to make this a condition for officers only, then they might have had a stronger police at their disposal and he himself would have been less anxious.

M. Laval was throughout emphatic that his policy was one of conciliation with Germany. He had been the first French Minister to go to Berlin<sup>6</sup> and he was determined to do all in his power to ensure that the issue of the Saar should not become a cause of friction between the two countries. He had himself seen the German Ambassador and appealed to him to induce Hitler

<sup>4</sup> Of August 31, 1934. Cf. No. 75, note 16.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 186.

<sup>6</sup> M. Laval, at that time President of the Council, had visited Germany, September 27-29, 1931; cf. Volume II, Nos. 254-5 and 257.



to calm the German press, and in return he had promised to calm the French press. Hitler had done so and so had he, and the press of the two countries were much calmer.

Again, M. Laval had undertaken to the German Ambassador that he would be willing to discuss at the Committee of Three in Rome provisions for payment in respect of the coal mines, it being understood that the possibility of a vote for the status quo should not be ruled out by such discussion. Upon that basis progress had recently been made at Rome.

*Italy.* M. Laval had recently sent detailed instructions to the French Ambassador in Rome. These covered three heads.

(1) *Austria.* When M. Barthou and I had been in Geneva in September we had agreed with the Italians upon a form of re-emphasis of the February declaration in respect of Austria which had helped the situation.<sup>7</sup> But beyond this the whole question of intervention in Austria from any quarter must be cleared up. Italy no doubt realised that any entry of Italian troops into Austria would inevitably be followed by the entry of Yugoslav troops also.

(2) *German re-armament.* It was important that there should be an understanding between France and Italy as to Italy's attitude towards German re-armament, since this affected Italy as it affected France.

(3) *Africa.* Detailed proposals had been sent both in respect of the Libyan frontier and other Italian claims in Africa. He had done his best to satisfy them and as a former Colonial Minister he knew the subject well, but Italy had opened her mouth so wide that he was not over-optimistic on this point. M. Laval hoped for a detailed reply from M. Chambrun in the course of the next day or two and would keep us informed. He added that he would also keep the Yugoslav Government informed of every phase of his negotiation with Italy. Nor would he make any agreement with Italy of which Yugoslavia could not approve. He would not risk losing the real friendship of Yugoslavia for the shadow of Italian friendship, for he was fully alive to the danger of Yugoslavia being drawn into the German orbit.

*Yugoslavia.* M. Laval expressed himself as very anxious at the situation created in Yugoslavia by the murder of King Alexander. There was no doubt that public opinion in that country had been deeply stirred and it would be necessary to try to find something to strengthen the hands of those in Yugoslavia who were trying to calm their own public. On my pointing out the difficulty of any international action to deal with terrorism, M. Laval agreed that it was scarcely possible to imagine a convention on the subject, but still we might be able to agree upon a Council resolution which would be helpful. Some action of this kind must be taken at Geneva or the situation would get out of hand. The tension might be considerably eased if Signor Mussolini could be induced to make some spontaneous gesture such as he had previously made in his Milan speech.<sup>8</sup> M. Laval had asked M. Chambrun to suggest this to Signor Mussolini.

To show me how great was his anxiety about the situation in Yugoslavia, M. Laval said that his real purpose in coming to Geneva had been to try to

<sup>7</sup> Cf. No. 124, note 1.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 132, note 3.

calm M. Yevtitch<sup>9</sup> and the Yugoslav delegation here. He made the excuse that he had come to Geneva to reply to the tributes to M. Barthou. That, however, was not the truth, and he would not have come but for the anxiety which he would not conceal from His Majesty's Government. He appealed to me to do all I could when I saw M. Yevtitch later in the afternoon to second his efforts in what was for him a specially difficult situation.

Copy to Paris. Not repeated elsewhere.

<sup>9</sup> Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs and head of the Yugoslav delegation to the League of Nations.

## No. 201

### *Memoranda on German Rearmament by H.M. Military and Air Attachés at Berlin<sup>1</sup>*

[C 8126/20/18]

BERLIN, November 21, 1934

(1)

The Ambassador,

Colonel Paget, who is in charge of the section of the War Office Intelligence Directorate dealing with Western and Central Europe, has just completed a four days' visit to Berlin, having previously visited the British Military Attaché at Brussels and The Hague. The German Military Attaché in London had evidently notified the R.W.M.<sup>2</sup> (Ministry of Defence) of this visit, and I was informed by the R.W.M. that they hoped I would bring Colonel Paget to that Department and asked me to mention the names of any senior officers with whom Colonel Paget would like to have a talk. Knowing how little a German visitor to London would be encouraged to talk to officers at the War Office, I asked for the interview to be limited to General Beck, Chef des Truppenamts,<sup>3</sup> and Colonel von Stülpnagel, in charge of the Intelligence Directorate. General von Reichenau<sup>4</sup> very kindly asked both Colonel Paget and myself to dine with him to meet Colonel von Stülpnagel before making his official visit.

The R.W.M. took the opportunity of Colonel Paget's visit to restate their case, probably in the hopes that it might receive consideration from higher quarters. At the meetings in the R.W.M. General Beck and Colonel von Stülpnagel were very friendly but extremely correct as regards the subjects they discussed; on the other hand, both General von Reichenau and Colonel von Stülpnagel spoke very freely at the dinner.

With practically every activity secret and concealed, the R.W.M. are evidently feeling the difficulty of the present situation very keenly, and there

<sup>1</sup> These memoranda were communicated to Sir J. Simon by Sir E. Phipps on the occasion of his visit to London, November 24-26, 'to help the Cabinet Committee on German Rearmament'; see No. 211 below, note 3, and No. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Reichswehrministerium, the Reichswehr Ministry.

<sup>3</sup> Head of the 'Troops Office' in the Reichswehr Ministry: in effect Chief of the Army General Staff (see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, p. 1157).

<sup>4</sup> Chief of the 'Armed Forces Office' in the Reichswehr Ministry.

seems to be no doubt that they are increasingly anxious for a convention to legalise their rearmament. It was interesting to hear General von Reichenau describing it as rearmament instead of reorganization, the word hitherto used. This secret rearmament was described as being forced on them; they had tried every means to obtain recognition of the fact that they were defenceless, a humiliation they felt they did not deserve, and they had adopted their present method as the best possible way of attaining security and of removing from aggressively-minded neighbours the temptation which their defenceless state presented. They realized that both the French and the British were very well informed as to the progress of their rearmament; they have no intention of improving our information on this particular subject at present; in fact Colonel von Stülpnagel said that although he would welcome more questions from me, organization was a barred subject.

I am under the impression that the phrase in the telegram No. 244<sup>5</sup> of 16th November 'R.W.M. on the other hand favour a rapid advance so long as there is no intervention' is not quite accurate, for the reason that they have no intention of going beyond their fixed programme, and the need for the intensive tempo of their rearmament will come to an end automatically when the Saar plebiscite takes place. Actual rearmament, or the reported state of this, has progressed sufficiently far to be a real deterrent to any section of the French nation who have contemplated military action. The R.W.M. are duly grateful that there has been no intervention up to date, but the conversations I have had lately suggest clearly that the R.W.M. will shortly have to come into the open and earnestly desire the necessary toleration and permission from the ex-Allied Powers. General von Reichenau was at great pains to emphasize that their rearmament was limited, except as regards bombers, to the proposals made to Mr. Eden in Berlin.<sup>6</sup> He stated that the R.W.M. would not go too fast or too far and pointed out that he, as Chef des Wehrmachtamts, controlled the allotment of funds to all three services. He specifically included the air force as the third service in the Wehrmacht (defence force), and described how he, as chief of the Defence Minister's Cabinet, was responsible for drawing up the Wehrmacht estimates and allotting the money according to the proportionate strength laid down by General von Blomberg. He instanced how he had refused RM. 300 million to the Navy for new construction, and said that if General Göring asked for money for more bombers when heavy artillery for the Reichsheer<sup>7</sup> was considered a more urgent requirement, funds for the bombers would not be made available until the artillery deficiency was made good.

NOTE: This statement does not quite agree with the information on this subject given in my note to Mr. Newton,<sup>8</sup> where it is suggested that General Göring had been given a free hand in building up the air force. It is possible that the financial control of the air force has been obtained by the R.W.M. since that time.

<sup>5</sup> No. 190.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Eden had visited Berlin, February 19-23; see Volume VI, Nos. 302-7.

<sup>7</sup> i.e. the national army.

<sup>8</sup> See No. 40.

He admitted that the R.W.M. had the first call on Reich funds for this year and for two years more, but at the end of this period the R.W.M. would have to be content with money for maintenance and normal replacement only. If this is true it is evident that the material equipment of the Reichswehr is to be completed by the end of the financial year 1936-37.

I feel sure that the main reason for volunteering this information that the R.W.M. controlled the air force in peace as well as war was with the object of allaying any fears we might have that it was possible for the impulsive Air Minister to employ his bombers on some wild cat plan of his own. General von Reichenau took great pains to enlarge on Germany's determination to cause the Saar plebiscite to take place peaceably, so far as in their power lay. He described how Hitler had personally ordered all executive ministries to take every precaution to avoid disorder; he went on to point out how suicidal it would be for Germany to create any incident which might lead to armed intervention while the Reichsheer was in process of expanding.

I have already reported the gist of General von Reichenau's remarks about the determination of Herr Hitler to respect the demilitarized zone in spite of the fact that it grossly infringed the sovereignty of Germany,<sup>9</sup> and I am convinced that the activities of the Police, S.S. and S.A. in the Rhineland are entirely defensive in character.

A. T[HORNE], *Military Attaché*

(2)

*Expansion of the German Army and attitude towards rearmament*

BERLIN, November 23, 1934

The Ambassador,

The best description of the present day German army was the remark made lately by an officer in the Defence Ministry: 'Don't ask me about the organization of the Reichsheer, there isn't any, it is nothing but a gigantic training camp'. This picture is confirmed by every observer in Germany and though the veil has been drawn over all military activities, these are too universal for effective concealment. The Defence Ministry evidently realize how alarmed Europe has become as a result of this secret activity and they have thought it either expedient or necessary to lift the veil partially. It is obvious that my colleagues from those countries who were not directly involved in the 1914-18 war have been given reassuring information as to the scope of the rearmament in progress. That they (the Defence Ministry) intend to let us see the picture shortly is evident from General von Reichenau's remark to me last week that the British officers for attachment to the German army would be welcome to go to *any* unit (*i.e.*, legal or illegal) after January 1935. Whether he meant to imply that by that date the Saar question would have been liquidated or that the reorganized army would have assumed its final shape, I am unable to say, but it is clearly their intention to allow the German army to be on public view by February next. At this moment I believe the German army to be undergoing the following transformation.

<sup>9</sup> This report by the Military Attaché has not been traced in Foreign Office archives.

In Munich a third Army H[ead] Q[uarters] ('Gruppenkdo') is believed to exist; in each Corps area ('Wehrkreiskdo') two 'Wehrgauleitungen' have been formed, and each of these represents the cadre H.Q. of a new Infantry Division.

In the Cavalry the divisional organization has been abolished and in its place a Corps H.Q., dealing direct with Brigades, has been formed; the Brigades, whose number is uncertain, are to consist of two Regiments. In addition, the Cavalry have thrown off personnel, who constitute the bulk of a new Mechanized Formation, which, it is believed, will consist of a H.Q. and three Divisions, though it may be many months before these Mechanized Divisions are completely organized and equipped.

In the Artillery each Field Artillery unit has not only thrown off two new Field Artillery units but has expanded to provide medium and anti-aircraft units as well, though it is thought that the Horsed Transport units may have also been used in the formation of the latter.

The Infantry and Engineers have apparently contented themselves with triplicating. The Signal Service has had to provide all the new formations with signal units, while the Mechanical Transport troops have been used in conjunction with Cavalry personnel to form all the new formations of Armoured Fighting units.

It is believed that the Transport Service of the new army will be found to exist in the N.S. Motor Corps (N.S.K.K.) which may remain as a species of militia outside the regular army.

One can therefore expect to see early next year a regular German army organized into:—

#### *Higher Formations*

- (i) three Army H.Qs.
- (ii) seven Corps H.Qs.
- (iii) one Cavalry Corps H.Qs.
- (iv) one Mechanized Formation H.Qs.
- (v) twenty-one Infantry Divisions.
- (vi) three Mechanized Divisions.
- (vii) a number of Cavalry Brigades.

I am firmly of the opinion that the German Defence Ministry have no intention of further expanding the army beyond the reorganization outlined above. I hear on very good authority that the extraordinary expenditure is to cease at the end of the financial year 1936-37, by which date it is hoped to have completed the provision of full equipment and accommodation. Recognition will, in my opinion, make no difference to the extent of rearmament, though it should enable us to know more exactly what is going on and so put an end to the chronic series of scares.

The Police contain organized, fully armed units quartered in barracks and with a very high standard of training. These are required in peace for internal security, as it is desired not to use the army for this purpose. In war it is likely

that fear of repetition of the events of November 1918 will compel the retention of these police formations in their peace function in order to make certain that revolution at home or panics resulting from hostile air attacks will not compel Germany to sue for peace at any price. At the outset of a war, however, I think they would be used as a covering force, particularly in the demilitarized zone, while the army is preparing to take the field. As far as I can gather, the Schutz-Staffel constitute an armed special constabulary organization particularly intended to assist in the maintenance of internal security and in preventing disorder during air-raids.

The strength of the Police units which could be used as infantry may amount to 100,000, the total S.S. 300,000, but these are outside figures and do not represent military strength.

From the point of view of war, not to-day but to-morrow, more important than the present-day army are the organizations for pre-military training. It would be a substantial contribution to disarmament if Germany could be induced to restrict the military element in the youth organizations. As, however, Germany is not prepared to be denied rights enjoyed by other powers, it is most improbable that this would be agreed to unless France and Italy were in return to make similar promises.

Pre-military training of German youth begins with children in the Young Folk. These march with packs on their backs, play with signal, &c., instruments, and learn the team spirit and to obey orders of slightly older boys. At 14 they pass to the senior branch of the same organization, and as Hitler Youths receive increasingly militarized instructions. They are then encouraged at about the age of 18 to acquire a sport badge corresponding to the 'brevet d'aptitude physique' of their French contemporaries and in some cases, especially where the youths have been privileged to attend a course at a school for leaders, they are almost trained up to the standard of the French 'brevet de préparation élémentaire au service militaire'. These organizations are very popular with youths of all classes. In them the youth acquires a martial spirit. Too young to remember the last war, imbued with the idea that Germany was unbeaten in the field, and, like the French youth of the 1870 generation, growing up with the longing for revenge, they will constitute a very real danger to world peace unless this orientation is changed in time.

The Labour Service, whether or not it includes specifically military training, is most valuable to the military strength of Germany, as by corporate discipline and physical training it turns out the young man sent to it from the Hitler Youth fit in mind and body to receive specialized military training from the moment of his joining the colours and so enables the period of service in the army to be curtailed.

The S.A. and S.S. units which are often reckoned as military are in general unfit from the point of view of discipline, training and physique for active service in the field, but selected personnel between the age of 18, when the Hitler Youth is transferred to them, and the age of 25 are trained in camps under army instructors and are then available and suitable as reservist n.c.o.'s. I think it probable that very shortly all the best man-power will be made to

go from the Hitler Youth to the army (either direct or through the Labour Service) and not be put into S.A. or S.S. till a couple of years after their discharge, i.e. when the army no longer requires them to be available for recall without general mobilization (cf. the 'disponibles' of the French Army). While in the S.A. and S.S. their refresher training as reservists would present no difficulties. It is difficult to make a reliable forecast of future developments, but from the fact that I believe the army has taken over control of the training directorate of the S.A., in order to ensure a common doctrine, and from the general talk that I hear on the subject of militia, I imagine that personnel leaving the Hitler Youth and/or the Labour Service who are not required to join the army will receive military training in the S.A. (A defect in the pre-war German system which is now frequently commented upon is that youths not taken for the army received no military training at all and had therefore to start *ab initio* when the army required them in the war.)

### *Conclusions*

The military strength of Germany after 1935 will consist of 21 Infantry Divisions and the equivalent of 5 Mobile Divisions. The men required to bring the army up to a war strength of 63 Infantry Divisions will be kept fit in the militia portion of the S.A.; the recruits for the army will be in the Labour Service and the Hitler Jugend, while the Police and S.S. will be in charge of the home front.

During the last two years every German army officer with whom I have spoken on the subject has adopted the same attitude towards rearmament. It can be summed up as follows: 'We do not want more than the minimum degree of security, we express this degree in  $x$  divisions,  $x$  aircraft and  $x$  ships. We have deliberately fixed a lower standard to that adopted by France and Poland. If you will let us rearm up to this, we will agree with minor adjustments to what you consider your minimum, we will abide by our figures so long as you will abide by yours, and will accept the same control as you do.'

To-day, the Germans have nearly reached the standard they have set as a minimum, but I believe they are still prepared to abide by it if others will do the same.

In their strategical and tactical training the greater emphasis is still placed on defence and delaying action, they possess at the moment no manual dealing with the offensive use of large mechanized formations, and they do not study the attack on fortresses. I do not suggest that these deficiencies will not be made good but I suggest that they show there is no intention of using the military forces for a war of aggression for some years to come.

A. T[HORNE], *Military Attaché*

(3)

*Secret*

[BERLIN], *November 23, 1934*

The Ambassador,

It will be evident to you that a much more accurate estimate of the present and future strength of the German Air Forces can be given by the Intelligence

Department of the Air Ministry than by the Air Attaché in Berlin for the following reasons:—

- (a) Air Ministry collate all information received from Air Attaché and other sources including Secret Service.
- (b) There is an impenetrable cloak of secrecy in Germany itself—a secrecy which is loyally observed both by the officials of the Army, Navy and Aviation whom the A[ir] A[ttaché] meets and by private people.

As you are aware, my predecessor<sup>10</sup> since about June 1933 found all channels of information closed to him; this policy of secrecy included the closing down to him and to foreigners of factories manufacturing aeroplanes and aero engines. This policy continues; but I can definitely report that there are signs that those concerned with the formation of Germany's Air Force are genuinely anxious to keep on as friendly relations as possible with the English in general and the British Royal Air Force in particular, and I have certainly gained the impression that the officers and those who have to pretend they are not officers, with whom I deal, are only too anxious to come more into the open.

I can state certain broad facts with complete assurance:—

- 1. Germany is without question creating an Air Force of the first class, making new aerodromes—closely guarded, often working in shifts at night.
- 2. Factories are greatly increasing their output of aeroplanes and engines, and factories formerly employed on other work are in some cases being turned on to aeroplanes and engine construction. I can name over 40 factories concerned on aircraft and aero-engine construction.

The number of hands employed on aircraft construction is reported to exceed 15,000 as a very conservative figure. The rate of output in airframes is over 150 per month, and of aero engines over 225 per month.

- 3. A very large number of pilots, far beyond the requirements of civil aviation, are being trained. I believe the output to be at least 100 per month. The training, as in the case of aerodrome construction and factory output, is being carried out at something very much like war pressure. There are believed to be approximately 5,000 trained pilots in Germany.
- 4. All aviation and aeroplane manufacture of every kind is controlled and centralized.
- 5. I know of at least 30 aerodromes which are undoubtedly going to form part of Germany's Air Force, with regard to which the utmost secrecy is maintained and at many of which there is already intense air activity. There are many others which are suspect, and about which more is probably known at Air Ministry.
- 6. The average consumption of petrol at each of the 30 aerodromes is 33,000 gallons per month (this most important and reliable information

<sup>10</sup> Group Captain F. P. Don had succeeded Wing Commander J. H. Herring as H.M. Air Attaché at Berlin in September 1934.



has just come to my knowledge and the utmost discretion is necessary as to what use is made of it). I have not yet heard from the Air Ministry what number of aircraft this figure indicates, but I have made a very rough calculation that it corresponds to about 18 aeroplanes on an average at each aerodrome=540 aircraft. But I would ask you to take this figure as only very approximate at present. It may well be an underestimate.

I would add the following observations:—

### *Organisation*

It is at present my opinion that the new Air Arm will be under the Ministry of Defence (R.W.M.), the latter then having the Army, Navy and Air Force as its three arms.

General von Reichenau told the Military Attaché last week that the R.W.M. would look to the Air Arm as its principle [*sic*] weapon of offence in a future war. Whatever the organisation, part of the Air Force will co-operate with the Army troops and part with the Navy. What remains will be, presumably, a separate Bombing Force at the disposal of the R.W.M. in order to give effect to their strategic aim; this may or may not include the bombardment of cities; I can offer no evidence on this point yet. I cannot at present give you any definite information as to the strength of the Bombing Force. I can only remind you that reports of varying reliability are received that three-engined bombers, principally the Ju 52, are being built in large numbers; in March the Air Ministry computed that 300 multi-engined aircraft were being or were about to be built; some of these may well be for *bona fide* Air Line Transport, but they have a high percentage of value as bombers.

### *Distribution of Aerodromes*

On this subject I have not yet been able to form any definite conclusions, in the absence of complete information. But, at present, the western portion of Germany appears to be 'less in the picture' than elsewhere.

I would draw your attention to a despatch dated October 24th from Paris to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,<sup>11</sup> which gives certain important information which the Military Attaché in Paris has received from the French War Office. The information alleges that the '1934 programme' will consist of 48 Squadrons by the 1st October, 1935. Total aircraft, approximately 500; that the '1935 programme' will consist of 99 Squadrons by the 1st October, 1936, i.e. an increase of 51 Squadrons. Total aircraft, approximately 1,300. The type of these squadrons will be as follows:—

					October 1 1935.	October 1 1936.
Squadrons.						
Bomber	.	.	.	.	30	60
Fighter	.	.	.	.	6	18
Reconnaissance	.	.	.	.	12	21

<sup>11</sup> This despatch, No. 1648 of October 24, is not printed.

Having just received this memorandum to-day I cannot comment on it any further than to say that, allowing for a certain reasonable expansion rate, the figures given for October 1st, 1935, confirm in some measure my calculation; the expansion for October 1st, 1936, is entirely new information to me but its truth would not in the least surprise me if only a percentage of the reports and rumours which we get are true.

In Appendix 'B' of the despatch there are 48 aerodromes mentioned, about 30 of which I can already confirm and many of the others are in my files as suspect.

F. P. DON, *Air Attaché*

**No. 202**

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 22, 7.20 p.m.)*  
*No. 101 L.N. Telegraphic [R 6565/37/3]*

GENEVA, *November 22, 1934, 7.20 p.m.*

Following from Mr. Eden:—

Tevfik Rustu Bey<sup>1</sup> asked to see me this morning. He spoke first of the situation in Yugoslavia. He had himself recently been to Belgrade. While in that capital he had seen many leaders of Yugoslav opinion and had been much impressed with the strength of public feeling with respect to Hungarian complicity in the recent assassination.<sup>2</sup> Turkey was herself friendly to Hungary and he had done what he could to calm Yugoslav indignation. He was however bound to tell me that the situation was serious and that unless something could be done internationally to reassure Yugoslav opinion the consequences might be extremely grave. He himself felt this so strongly that he would have been willing to urge Hungarian Government to bring this matter to Geneva themselves had not Yugoslav Government so decided.<sup>3</sup> In answer to question he agreed that Hungarian Government might not itself be directly responsible for what had happened but he feared that there had certainly been at least slackness if nothing worse on the part of minor officials in that country.

Tevfik went on to speak of Austria. He said that he wished to put to me a proposal which he had made to Monsieur Laval recently. The Balkan group of Powers were agreed as to the necessity of some declaration in respect of independence of Austria.<sup>4</sup> If, however, such declaration was to be effective

<sup>1</sup> Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs since 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Of Alexander I, King of Yugoslavia, and M. Barthou; cf. No. 137, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> In a letter of November 22 to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations (see *L/N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1765-6) the Yugoslav Government requested that the question of possible Hungarian complicity in the murder of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia should be put on the agenda of the session of the League of Nations beginning on December 5. See *ibid.*, pp. 1772-94, for the memorandum submitted by the Yugoslav Government.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 177.

it must be made by all Austria's neighbours. If it could be signed not only by France and Italy but also by the Little Entente, Balkan group and Germany it would be so effective. If, however, such an undertaking was to bring real appeasement to Central Europe it should also contain undertaking by each of the signatories to respect the frontier of all those who signed. Tevfik added that he had not suggested that Great Britain should take part in any such undertaking but he thought it should be a condition of the signature of such document that it had at least the United Kingdom's benevolent patronage.

#### No. 203

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 23)*

*No. 251 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7867/74/18]*

BERLIN, November 22, 1934

The French Ambassador tells me that as a result of M. Laval's last conversation with the German Ambassador at Paris,<sup>1</sup> and of the talks of the Saar Committee and experts at Rome the Saar controversy seems to have entered upon a much calmer phase. He says the German experts at Rome were surprised at the moderation of the French experts, whom they found even more forthcoming than the Italians.

M. François-Poncet has seen Baron von Neurath and Herr von Bülow and finds them both in a more optimistic frame of mind.

My Italian colleague informs me that Herr von Bülow actually condescended to express to him warm appreciation of Baron Aloisi's activities as President of the Saar Committee. Signor Cerruti<sup>2</sup> thinks the Germans were obsessed with the idea that we were all in league to wreak vengeance on them over the Saar for Dr. Dollfuss' assassination, but that now they at last realise we are doing our best to judge the Saar question objectively and on its merits.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 200, pp. 228-9.

<sup>2</sup> Italian Ambassador at Berlin.

#### No. 204

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 23)*

*No. 252 Saving: Telegraphic [C 7868/247/18]*

BERLIN, November 22, 1934

My immediately preceding telegram Saving.<sup>1</sup>

The French Ambassador tells me that he again sounded Baron von Neurath and Herr von Bülow on the subject of the Eastern Pact, and found them still opposed thereto. He thereupon told them that they must not be merely

<sup>1</sup> No. 203.

negative; if they turned down that Pact they should at least propose something else.

M. François-Poncet thinks that once the Saar question is settled conversations on disarmament must be renewed, and he believes that the attitude of M. Flandin and M. Laval will be more helpful than that of M. Doumergue and M. Barthou. He still favours a Convention, provided always that the Germans offer some compensation in the shape of a Pact, and by eventually returning to the League of Nations.

## No. 205

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 23, 2.50 p.m.)*  
*No. 103 L.N. Telegraphic [C 7908/74/18]*

GENEVA, November 23, 1934, 3.15 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

Latest information received by Secretariat from Rome this morning indicates that first meeting of Council to deal with report of Committee of Three on the Saar will probably be held Monday or Tuesday.<sup>1</sup> Tuesday is more likely.

I should be grateful therefore if any instructions you may have for me on attitude I should adopt if Monsieur Laval takes line he foreshadowed to me (see my telegram No. 72 Saving)<sup>2</sup> could reach me by Tuesday morning at the latest.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. November 26 or 27. The first meeting of the 83rd (Extraordinary) Session of the Council in fact took place on December 5.

<sup>2</sup> No. 200.

## No. 206

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*  
*No. 361 Telegraphic [C 7917/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 23, 1934, 6.10 p.m.

Following from Waley<sup>1</sup> for Niemeyer,<sup>2</sup> Hotel Plaza.

The question of British financial interests in the Saar having been raised in Cabinet on Wednesday,<sup>3</sup> it was decided to ask the Chancellor, Foreign Secretary and President of the Board of Trade to confer on the steps to be

<sup>1</sup> Mr. S. D. Waley was a Principal Assistant in H.M. Treasury.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Otto Niemeyer (cf. No. 65, note 2), was a member of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations which met in Rome, November 16–December 3, 1934, to deal with financial and economic questions connected with the Saar territory; cf. *L.N.O.J.*, December 1934, p. 1699.

<sup>3</sup> November 21.

taken to safeguard those interests when Aloisi's report is considered at Geneva. Can you give me an indication whether financial proposals to be made in the Report will adequately safeguard the interests in question.

No. 207

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 24, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 104 L.N. Telegraphic [C 7935/74/18]*

*Important*

GENEVA, November 23, 1934, 10.50 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden:

*Very confidential*

Mr. Knox arrived in Geneva and I had a first conversation with him this morning. I gave him information contained in your telegram No. 113<sup>1</sup> and he expressed thanks.

I asked Mr. Knox what were the prospects for the plebiscite and what progress he was making with recruitment of his police forces. He replied that there were several anxious elements in the situation. He could certainly give no undertaking that it would be possible to get through next two months without serious disturbance and the period immediately after plebiscite would be even more difficult than period before it. His chief anxiety was due to infiltration of undesirables from Germany into the Saar. It was difficult to get definite evidence but Mr. Knox was certain that this was going on. For instance he had heard of the presence of Austrians whom he suspected to be members of disbanded Austrian Legion. Moreover those inhabitants of the Saar who had been drafted into labour camps in Germany where they had received a measure of military training were all to be given leave to return to the Saar from December 23rd to January 17th. There were some 17,000 of these young men. I asked Mr. Knox if they were voters and he said that most of them were. This coupled with Christmas season was the ostensible reason for their leave. In addition there were at least 8,000 inhabitants of the Saar who were in reality, though not outwardly, members of S.A. and S.S. Clearly therefore there were sufficient potential elements of trouble.

The only sure way of meeting this situation would have been by use of regular troops. He had asked Committee of Three for 2,000 of those for this purpose. Committee had turned down proposal on the grounds that no country would have been willing to supply them. In the circumstances he was doing his best with his existing police force the morale of which had slightly improved of late and was also recruiting police from outside the Saar. His aim was to build up a force of 25 officers and 140 men. At present he had

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of November 22 contained the information that Mr. J. B. Browne, at that time H.M. Consul at Funchal, Madeira, was to be attached 'for the period of the plebiscite' to the staff of H.M. Consul-General at Frankfurt whose district included the Saar Territory. Mr. Browne would reside at Saarbrücken, 'report on events in the Saar', and 'serve as a channel of communication with Mr. Knox in the event of necessity'.

12 officers of whom 5 were English and 24 men. Only detachment which had so far arrived from outside was Czech. He hoped however that arrangements for organized detachment of serving police from Holland would be completed within the next few days. Mr. Knox was especially anxious that this information should on no account be divulged. He had also secured some officers from Scandinavian countries and was endeavouring to give his police force as international an aspect as possible since this in itself would have sobering effect.

Mr. Knox said that he would also be able to enlist some 20 ex-guardsmen in the ranks of his extra police in the same way as he had enlisted his 5 English officers but that he had not yet done so since he wanted to make quite sure that such a step would not embarrass us. If however this could be approved it would greatly assist him.

Mr. Knox expressed himself as pleased with the men supplied by Scotland Yard for whose services he was grateful.<sup>2</sup>

Danger of a putsch was not now from outside the Saar but from within it. If opportunity offered important thing was to impress German Ambassador that we looked to German Government to discourage Germans in the Saar rather than outside from undertaking anything of the kind and to make clear to them that we were sure there would be no putsch in the Saar unless instigated by German authority from outside. What Mr. Knox feared was repetition of July 25th in Austria<sup>3</sup> and anything that could be done to warn German Government against that would be helpful.

Mr. Knox has no direct contact with French Government. Though he himself knows personally French Officer Commanding troops in the neighbourhood he has neither seen him nor had any communication with him. He keeps touch with French Government and with French General Staff exclusively through his French colleague on the Commission.

Repeated to Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 103, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 9, note 2.

## No. 208

### *Memoranda by Sir E. Phipps on German Rearmament<sup>1</sup>*

[C 8014/20/18]

(1)

BERLIN, November 23, 1934

On 17th April M. Barthou cut short the disarmament negotiations by demanding Germany's return to the League, and by accusing Germany, on the basis of her new budget figures, of an intention to increase her army

<sup>1</sup> These memoranda were communicated to Sir J. Simon by Sir E. Phipps during his visit to London, November 24-26, 1934; cf. No. 201, note 1.

strength.<sup>2</sup> (The German budget figures indicated an increase of £17½ million at par.)

Seven months have now elapsed, during which Germany has been feverishly re-arming on land and in the air without hindrance or even protest on the part of M. Barthou or anybody else. The impression left by the summer and autumn is one of incessant marching and drilling. It is evident to any foreign observer that the German people, with their innate love of discipline and military training, are revelling in their new freedom. Even the demonstrations of the labour front and the peasant rallies seem to the outsider to be mainly military parades. We have to face the fact that, while other countries enjoy playing football or sipping coffee at little tables under trees, German youth is happiest playing at soldiers, and German manhood is happiest on the barrack square.

If M. Barthou anticipated the fall of the Hitler régime, he was mistaken. During these seven months important political changes have taken place. These can be summed up in a few words. The rowdy element in the Nazi party has been eliminated with the execution of Röhm and his friends and the partial disbandment of the S.A. Much of the unpractical party programme has been discarded. The army and the civil service have come into their own. There has been a general appeasement, and even the churches have now partly made their peace with Hitlerism. The return to normality has been very marked of late and the new régime seems to balance the scales to a nicety between Right and Left. It is of course a matter for speculation whether the working masses will continue to accept their lot with the same docility as heretofore, but the Government have the radio and the press in their hands, and it is hard to see how any opposition can assert itself against so ruthless a despot as Adolf Hitler. Even if Hitlerism were overturned Germany would never revert to the pacifist Weimar attitude, and no new Government would give much better terms than Hitler from the military point of view. The road to re-armament is open, and as month succeeds month the country feels its muscles hardening. Under any new Government the military will have great influence. The few short years during which a travesty of parliamentary government existed appear to have left no permanent impression. To all intents and purposes Germany has gone back to the time when the King of Prussia governed through his Ministers and the country had very little to say.

Why should Germany want to conclude a Convention? Because, wrongly in my opinion, she fears intervention sooner or later. When Germans put themselves into our shoes they know that they would intervene in a similar situation. To avoid the joint intervention of the Versailles Powers, which might result in a serious loss of prestige, they think it therefore desirable to resume the discussions as soon as the Saar is out of the way and pressure cannot be applied through that lever.

In the second place Germans are sensitive to a greater extent than people imagine to the moral stigma involved in flouting the Treaty of Versailles.

<sup>2</sup> The French Government's note of April 17, 1934, is printed as No. 8 in Cmd. 4559; cf. Volume VI, No. 395, enclosure.

Having suffered severely for their invasion of Belgium and having brought America into the war by violating international law they are perhaps over sensitive on the moral issue. The disarmament negotiations of last winter provided them with a semblance of moral justification for an army of 300,000, but the army and the people would much prefer a document signed, sealed and delivered to a rather mutilated I.O.U.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the economic position may prove a serious strain during the next few years, and the financial sacrifices entailed by the expansion of the army are bound to be considerable. Within the Nazi party itself men like Dr. Goebbels, Herr Frick,<sup>4</sup> Herr Rust<sup>5</sup> and others would prefer an army of 300,000 to an army of pre-war dimensions. Some of the pundits even shake their heads at the present military expansion, fearing that the military caste may eventually overcome the Brown House.<sup>6</sup> At any rate, until the new generation has been brought up in the strict Nazi faith it is dangerous, in their opinion, to go beyond the limits necessary for actual defence of the frontiers. This view is not held of course by General Göring or Colonel Hierl, the leader of the labour service.

Would Germany be prepared to give any concession beyond returning to the League? It is probable that Hitler would be ready to conclude with Czechoslovakia a pact similar to the Polish-German Agreement.<sup>7</sup> But German opinion, which has hardly recovered from the shock of the Polish pact, would view a pact of the scope of the Eastern pact with great misgivings. Germany argues that such a pact to be faithfully observed would involve a great increase in Germany's army. Hitler might also make the condition that Great Britain should be a party.

Seen from Berlin the French attitude of last April was hard to understand. To-day, it is still harder to fathom. Monsieur Barthou refused a convention on the ground, I believe, that it would merely tie the hands of France and not those of Germany. For the same reason a shipwrecked seaman ought to refuse to climb into a boat on the ground that it looked leaky. In the absence of a convention Germany is re-arming just the same, and as soon as she has reached the end of the first stage—say twenty-one divisions—pressure to expand further may set in. The Polish army or the Russian army may be used as a bogey and the militarist, to judge from experience, will ultimately carry the day. By that time Germany will have begun to realise her great strength which lies in the fact that her neighbours regard military training, which to her is the pleasantest pastime, as irksome if not intolerable. Presumably by that time also she will have observed that the respect of other countries is won by the big battalions. A convention signed now would forestall such a development, and prevent such an agitation from starting. In the case of reparations French tactics ended in a fiasco.<sup>8</sup> Are their tactics in the

<sup>3</sup> 'I owe you.'

<sup>4</sup> Reich Minister of the Interior.

<sup>5</sup> Reich Minister of Science, Education, and Popular Instruction.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. the brown-shirted Storm Troops (S.A.).

<sup>7</sup> Of January 26, 1934; cf. No. 1, note 5.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 156, note 4.



matter of rearmament to end in a similar fiasco, entailing, this time, very serious consequences for us all?

ERIC PHIPPS

(2)

DOWDING, *Walton Heath, November 25, 1934*

I do not think that any plan will ensure a satisfactory solution of German rearmament unless it be drawn up in close collaboration with France and Italy. Directly Germany sees that there is any really serious difference of opinion between any two of those Powers she will snap her fingers at us all.

It seems to me essential, therefore, that we should take advantage of the weeks before the Saar Plebiscite to reach the greatest common measure of agreement on this subject with France and Italy.

Pending the Saar Plebiscite, it would be very desirable not to make public our intentions. The Germans are a highly suspicious people and will be inclined to think we mean to use the Saar as a weapon—in fact as a form of blackmail. They would certainly do so if the ‘rôles’ were reversed and I feel sure it would create an excellent effect if, during Wednesday’s Debate,<sup>9</sup> the Government spokesmen could make it clear that there is no intention on our part to link the question of the Saar with that of German rearmament and that indeed the latter question will only be discussed at a reasonable time after the plebiscite.

This interval could be employed in securing such agreement as we can with France and Italy by means of friendly and confidential conversations with representatives of those Powers.

In this connexion, M. François-Poncet, who is a college friend of M. Flandin, tells me that although the latter and M. Laval are disposed to be much more realist and reasonable than M. Doumergue and M. Barthou in their attitude towards Germany, their position is very difficult. M. Tardieu and M. Doumergue are sulking in their tents and their supporters are only too ready to attack the present French Government and to accuse it of undue weakness *vis-à-vis* of Hitler. Some *quid pro quo* for legalising German rearmament will therefore be essential in the shape of (a) the return of Germany to the League, and (b) the conclusion of some Eastern Pact of Mutual Assistance.

(a) should present no great difficulties once ‘Gleichberechtigung’ is granted and certain modifications of League procedure are carried out.

(b) will be much harder to attain, firstly because of Polish opposition, secondly because of German reluctance to conclude such a pact, and thirdly because of Russia’s own lukewarmness in the matter.

*German reluctance* is due partly to a genuine fear of being driven into some dispute in which no vital German interests are at stake, and partly, doubtless,

<sup>9</sup> A debate was to take place in the House of Commons on Wednesday, November 28, after Mr. Churchill, Member of Parliament for Epping, had moved an amendment to the Address to be presented to H.M. King George V in which the view was expressed that Britain’s national defences, especially air defences, were ‘no longer adequate to secure the peace, safety, and freedom of Your Majesty’s faithful subjects’. See 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 857.

to a marked preference for bilateral agreements. These of course offer more scope for German intrigue (*vide* the Polish-German agreement which has virtually wrecked or at least seriously compromised the Franco-Polish alliance).<sup>10</sup>

*Russian lukewarmness* is due to Russia's decided preference for a *tête-à-tête* with France, who, however, keenly desires to avoid, by means of a general pact, the too close embraces of the Russian bear.

Perhaps the coming weeks might be used to obtain French (and Italian) agreement to an eventual Limitation of Armaments Convention, combined with Germany's return to the League and to the conclusion of bilateral pacts of non-aggression between Germany and certain of her neighbours. Hitler could hardly refuse to conclude such pacts for he has repeatedly expressed to me his willingness to do so. Finally, it might be possible to crown this edifice by some covering agreement such as would satisfy French public opinion without conveying to the elusive and dynamic Hitler too great an impression of bonds.

An additional reason for welcoming a certain delay in the opening of regular negotiations on German rearmament is the impending replacement of General Weygand<sup>11</sup> by General Gamelin.<sup>12</sup> The latter is, M. François-Poncet assures me, disposed to be much more reasonable than the former.

ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Volume VI, No. 83, Annex, paragraph 9.

<sup>11</sup> General Weygand, Vice-President of the Supreme War Council and Inspector-General of the French Army, was to retire on January 21, 1935, on reaching the retirement age (68 years) for French general officers.

<sup>12</sup> Chief of the French General Staff.

## No. 209

*Mr. Murray*<sup>1</sup> (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 24, 10.30 p.m.)  
*No. 360 Telegraphic [C 7940/74/18]*

ROME, November 24, 1934, 7.30 p.m.

Sir E. Drummond's telegram No. 352.<sup>2</sup>

I had conversations last night with the Head of the League of Nations Section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one of the French experts attending Saar negotiations and Sir O. Niemeyer. From what they told me it appears fairly certain negotiations will terminate within next day or two as compromise solutions on most important points appear to be in sight or already assured.

Germans under great pressure were apparently ready to agree to Plebiscite Tribunal continuing to function for a year after Plebiscite and act as 'organ',

<sup>1</sup> Acting Chargé d'Affaires during the absence on sick leave of Sir E. Drummond, November 18-December 2, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> No. 194.

to use Signor Biancheri's words, for protection of those persons in the Saar not covered by the three years period referred to in telegram under reference. Germans also apparently agreed to accept reference of differences to the Hague Court.

In regard to finance a compromise on the lines of writing off German claims in respect of French notes circulating in the Saar against French claims in respect of value of mines appeared to be in sight and this was also the case in regard to workmen's assurance.

Signor Biancheri told me report of Committee of Three would be discussed with the British representative at Geneva before it was formally submitted.

Repeated to Paris and Geneva.

## No. 210

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 24, 9.35 p.m.)  
No. 363 Telegraphic [C 7941/74/18]*

ROME, November 24, 1934, 7.30 p.m.

Your telegram No. 361.<sup>1</sup>

Following for Mr. Waley from Sir O. Niemeyer.

In my opinion Baron Aloisi being entirely feckless improbable his report will deal with anything so mundane as financial interests or that Geneva discussion will afford effective opportunity to do so.

Nor am I sure what interest you refer to. Supreme British interest is I believe peaceful settlement. Under pressure Financial Committee believe arrangement can be made on the basis of 95% French notes to mines, 5% to foreign loans approved by Saar Commission. This protects for some years Saarbrücken Bonds. You can do no better and if the above is obtained it will be a great step. Expect to leave here Monday.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 206.

<sup>2</sup> November 26.

## No. 211

*Memorandum on German Rearmament<sup>1</sup>  
[C 7875/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 24, 1934

Our information regarding the present state and rate of German rearmament is contained in the four papers about German rearmament (C.I.D.

<sup>1</sup> The first draft of this memorandum, prepared for the information of the Secretary of State apparently by Mr. Perowne, was dated November 22; it was put into its final shape by Mr. Sargent.

Nos. 1150 B, 1151 [?B], 1152 B, and G.R. (34) 2),<sup>2</sup> which have recently been circulated to the Cabinet.<sup>3</sup>

2. The salient points of this rearmament are two. First, the Treaty of Versailles allowed Germany an army of 100,000 men organised in seven infantry and three cavalry divisions. The latest War Office report states that the German army has been expanded to three cavalry and twenty-one infantry divisions with a peace establishment of 300,000 men; and that the Germans are working at high pressure to equip this increased army, and to provide adequate mobilisation and war reserves. The War Office add that all the indications point to Germany's present preparations being entirely defensive and that neither in the west nor in the east are there at present signs of an aggressive military policy. The second point is that whereas the Treaty of Versailles allowed Germany no military or naval air force, the Air Ministry in a report of November 21st, state that whilst Germany, even by next autumn, will have some 500 aircraft in the front line, it is probable that by the autumn of 1935 she will have some 1300 first line aircraft, a figure which is in excess of the present first line strength of the French metropolitan air forces. Consideration should also be given to the industrial and commercial aspect of the matter, i.e. the transformation of factories, and accumulation of stocks of raw material.

3. In considering at what point this German rearmament will become dangerous it would be unwise to assume that this will only be when Germany will have attained the position of being able to wage an aggressive war against a major Power or a combination of Powers. This may not be for many years yet. But a danger point will be reached long before then. Namely, at the moment when, in her own opinion, Germany feels herself sufficiently armed to secure compliance with the sort of demand which she is likely to wish to make upon individual Powers without risk of retaliation or resistance. It is this more immediate danger point which it behoves us now to consider rather than the more distant and problematical one when Germany will be able to take on the world in arms once more. It will be convenient to describe this more immediate danger point as 'zero hour'. It is difficult to

<sup>2</sup> These papers (not here printed) were circulated by the Committee of Imperial Defence. They contained memoranda on German rearmament prepared in the Admiralty, War Office, and Air Ministry (1150-B); memoranda on Germany's aircraft industry (1151-B) and armament reserves (1152-B); and a memorandum by the Air Staff on the position of German air rearmament (G.R.(34) 2).

<sup>3</sup> The Cabinet discussed on November 21 'a number of recent indications that German re-armament was proceeding in an alarming manner'. It appointed a Cabinet Committee composed of the Prime Minister and the Secretaries of State for War, Foreign Affairs, and India to consider the question and to make recommendations for future policy. The Committee met twice on November 22 and once on November 25. Sir Eric Phipps attended the third meeting. At a special meeting on November 26 the Cabinet approved the recommendations of the Committee, including the proposed acceleration of the Air Force Programme 'to provide the 22 Squadrons for Home Defence and 3 Squadrons for the Fleet Air Arm in two years' time' in addition to the four squadrons already being formed. This decision was announced in the House of Commons on November 28; see 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 878.

hazard any estimate of the date at which this zero hour is likely to be reached. But it can scarcely be delayed very much longer, in view of the increased rate of German rearmament. In fact it may occur any time after the Saar question is out of the way.

4. When 'zero hour' is reached, we may take it that Germany's policy will become increasingly arrogant without being actually aggressive. Instead of emitting protests and airing grievances Germany will make demands and assert rights. All present indications seem to show that she will begin by freeing herself from the shackles of Part 5 of the Treaty of Versailles, either by means of agreed multilateral cancellation (possibly within the framework of a Disarmament Convention), or else by unilateral repudiation. Once she has achieved that, she may be expected to turn her attention to the absorption of Austria and the penetration of central Europe.

5. An overstrong Germany is not in the interest of Great Britain. A tranquil Europe, for many years at any rate, is unlikely to be promoted by the existence of such a Germany; and even outside Europe the existence of such a Germany may soon end in raising questions of considerable inconvenience for His Majesty's Government.

6. What attitude therefore are we to adopt in the face of this impending zero hour? The following possibilities suggest themselves:—

(a) We can continue as at present, in the hope that Germany will take no unwise action when zero hour is reached and that we shall not therefore be faced with a crisis at all. Germany will merely continue the process of secret rearmament; and we shall proceed, on the basis of such information as we can obtain regarding German rearmament, to rearm ourselves to the extent which we may consider necessary to cover immediate necessities and to enable us to honour our Locarno obligations. As we shall be proceeding on the hypothesis that Germany will not be taking disturbing action when 'zero hour' has been reached, it will not be necessary for us to concert plans of defence with France or to develop arrangements for the defence of Belgium and Holland. The objection to this course is that we shall be proceeding on the assumption that Germany's policy will remain passive and that Germany will be content to continue indefinitely in her present anomalous position of rearming 'in secret' and in violation of her treaty obligations; whereas all our present indications are that she wishes to regularise her international position in this respect as soon as may be. A further disadvantage would be that such a policy would, in fact, give Germany all the advantage of the initiative, since it would be she, and not we, who would select the moment for raising the question of her rearmament. Moreover, so long as this obscure situation continues, it would be difficult to explain and to justify to British public opinion the need for increasing the armaments of this country.

(b) We can act on the assumption that Germany does intend to rid herself of Part 5 of the Treaty as soon as 'zero hour' is reached. On this assumption we can, when Germany approaches us, definitely reject any request which Germany may make for the cancellation of Part 5 by multilateral agreement, on the ground that the *quid pro quo* obtainable from Germany is

inadequate and also useless, since we cannot trust Hitler's signature. This would practically drive Germany to an open repudiation of the Treaty. A chaotic situation would then ensue which would certainly not increase the stability and pacification of Europe. And however much Germany might put herself in the wrong by repudiation *we* would certainly be criticised for keeping international animosities alive by insisting on the letter of the law after the substance had long since vanished. In fact a flat and unconditional refusal to legalise Germany's rearmament, if [*? we were*] invited to do so by the German Government, does not appear to be any longer practical politics even though it might still have a certain attraction for the French.

(c) Still acting on the assumption that Germany does intend to rid herself of Part V of the Treaty as soon as Zero Hour is reached, we can when approached by her try to come to a settlement with her on the best terms obtainable, for at the moment it seems unlikely that she will proceed to unilateral repudiation without first attempting to obtain cancellation by agreement. The line she might take would be to propose that in return for the cancellation of Part V of the Treaty Germany should agree to return to Geneva immediately and to submit to some very general limitations to armaments in the form of a 'common upper level'. There would seem little chance of obtaining from her the acceptance of the specific limitations to which she declared herself ready to agree last year.<sup>4</sup>

In such negotiations with Germany it might be difficult to carry France with us, for she has hitherto always refused to legalise German rearmament, but Italy and the United States would no doubt both support us. (N.B. Co-operation with the United States will be necessary, as the 1921 Peace Treaty between the United States and Germany<sup>5</sup> stipulated that the United States should enjoy all the advantages set forth in Part 5 of the Treaty of Versailles.)

The objections to this course are, in the first place, the danger of its involving a break with France, for if we went through with it without France, the inevitable effect would be a serious blow to Anglo-French relations and the whole principle of internation[al] co-operation. Furthermore, such an incomplete agreement would not remove the problem of German rearmaments from the arena of European politics, since in the eyes of France and others they would still be illegal. As a result, we should be faced with all the disadvantages of a discontented Germany, while we, by our action, would have risked depriving ourselves of our chief support (France) against her. On the other hand, there is little doubt that such a course with its appearance of magnanimity and realism combined would be popular with a considerable section of public opinion in this country.

There is of course always the possibility that under threat of isolation, France might feel compelled to join in such a settlement with Germany. In that case negotiations and subsequent settlement might take the satisfactory form of a renewed Disarmament Conference and of a Disarmament Convention.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Volume V, Nos. 434 and 489.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 134, note 4.

(d) We might decide to anticipate action by Germany at 'zero hour' by making arrangements with France forthwith on the basis that, far from allowing Part 5 of the Treaty to lapse, we should arraign Germany before the League for its violation. In such a policy we should certainly have the full support of France, but probably not that of Italy.

The advantage of this course would be that it would give us an opportunity of informing public opinion clearly and authoritatively of the nature of German rearmament which cannot at present be satisfactorily accomplished, by means merely of inspired articles in the Press or speeches by members of the Government or prominent individuals.

In the event of the arraignment of Germany before the League for the violation of Part 5 of the Treaty, it is inconceivable that Hitler would capitulate to the extent of submitting to a League investigation and a subsequent disarmament. The alternatives would lie between compromise and defiance, and Hitler's choice would depend largely on the state of Germany's internal situation, the degree of her rearmament, and on the attitude of Powers other than France and Great Britain.

If Germany adopted the policy of open defiance, it would probably take the form of a definite repudiation of Part 5 of the Treaty of Versailles in disregard of the League. We—and the League—should have to acquiesce in this defiance, for the coercion of Germany in such circumstances would be inconceivable. And as an inevitable corollary the question of French and British security would be raised at once in an acute form. The situation might thus rapidly develop in the direction of an Anglo-French alliance coupled with special arrangements for the defence of Holland and Belgium.

If, on the other hand, Germany were to compromise, there would be a possibility of our choosing to a certain extent the basis of negotiation which, while legalising German rearmament, would provide for undertakings by Germany which she would never be ready to give if she were allowed, as under (c) above, to take the initiative at a moment favourable to herself. In such circumstances, we might be able more easily to carry France with us than in any other circumstances; in which case the ultimate settlement might take the form of a Disarmament Convention.

The chances too of Hitler being ready to compromise if faced with this issue by France and Great Britain (and possibly Italy) combined, are not unfavourable if we are to judge by recent information from Berlin which shows that he would be much embarrassed by such action if taken jointly by the Versailles Powers in the immediate future before Germany's military and economic reorganisation is completed.

**No. 212**

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Newton (Berlin)*  
*No. 218 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 7973/20/18]*

*Urgent*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 26, 1934, 2 p.m.*

Please make an appointment for Sir E. Phipps to see the Chancellor (or if he is away the Minister for Foreign Affairs) tomorrow at whatever time can be arranged after midday in order that he may deliver important message from His Majesty's Government.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See No. 215 below.

**No. 213**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*  
*No. 220 Telegraphic [C 7974/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 26, 1934, 10 p.m.*

Following from Sargent for Sir E. Phipps.

Interview with German Ambassador<sup>1</sup> has had to be postponed until tomorrow (Tuesday) morning, and it is very doubtful whether it will be possible to send you a record of it before your own interview.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 222 below.

**No. 214**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*  
*Nos. 221, 222, and 223 Telegraphic [C 7975/20/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 26, 1934, 12 midnight*

1. The material contained in paragraphs 3 to 7 below is sent to you in fulfilment of the promise contained in the last sentence of paragraph 3 of the instructions handed to you prior to your departure for Berlin today.<sup>1</sup>

2. You should not embody this in any written communication, whether official or unofficial, but should use it at your discretion in the course of your interview with Herr Hitler tomorrow. It was impossible to arrange an interview with the German Ambassador today and accordingly I shall see him early tomorrow when I shall make a communication to him corresponding with that to be made by you, including the subjoined material.

3. Rumours have been prevalent for some time past that Germany is engaged on a large scale reorganisation of her military forces. We believe that these rumours are founded on fact and that Germany is expanding her

<sup>1</sup> No. 215 below.



100,000 long service army into a peace-time short service army of 300,000 men. We understand that this 300,000 army will comprise 21 infantry divisions together with mechanised formations and reorganised cavalry. We are bound to assume that this expanded and reorganised army will be equipped with a wide range of modern weapons.

4. Apart from this, the military potentialities of various organisations controlled by the government cannot be left out of account.

5. This year's army budget made provision for the addition of 172 million Reichsmarks which was defended by the German government as being necessary in view of the preparations for the change over to a short service army.

6. His Majesty's Government have received information which leaves little doubt that Germany is at present actively engaged in creating a military air force of considerable size and of offensive capacity. Today the number of aircraft of service types is believed to be not less than 1,000, including a number of bombers. Aerodromes are being rapidly constructed and the output of Germany's aircraft industry has doubled within the last six months.

7. Germany's air budget in 1932/3 amounted to 43,343,200 Reichsmarks. Her budget in 1933/4 had risen to 78,348,450 Reichsmarks and this year 1934/5 to the surprising figure of 210,187,650 Reichsmarks.

8. You understand, I know, that we do not wish the observations you make to lead to an immediate discussion of the prospects or conditions of a return to Geneva (we must first consult the French and others) but rather to impress Hitler with the seriousness of European concern so that he may in due course, but without express request from us, make his own observations in reply.

## No. 215

*Message given to Sir E. Phipps by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs prior to Sir E. Phipps's departure for Berlin on November 26, 1934*

[C 7975/20/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 26, 1934*

We are greatly obliged to you for coming over at short notice to help the Cabinet Committee on German re-armament, with special reference to next Wednesday's debate.<sup>1</sup> The Cabinet this morning has accepted the general view of the Committee with certain modifications indicated below.

2. You are returning by the 2 o'clock train today and you should endeavour to see Herr Hitler at once. I am seeing the German Ambassador this afternoon<sup>2</sup> and shall inform the French and Italian Ambassadors (and also the United States Ambassador) tomorrow. I will tell Herr von Hoesch that you are going to make a communication tomorrow.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 208, note 9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 213.

3. You should say that we have been greatly concerned for some time on the subject of German re-armament. Statements have been made in the French Chamber more than once, and next Wednesday the amendment which is being moved to the Address (and which we cannot evade or postpone—it must be publicly discussed) requires and compels a statement from us on the subject. We wish, therefore, to inform the German Government in advance. It appears to us that the increase in the German army, together with its re-armament, and the development of a military air force, are facts which are beyond dispute. (I will send a cypher message to await you in Berlin enlarging to some extent on this observation and deciding how far further details should be mentioned to Hitler.)<sup>3</sup>

4. You should impress upon him the extremely serious view which we take of the effect on the mind of Europe of all this, together with the militaristic trend of German education and training. It is making a peaceful and agreed solution of the international situation more and more difficult. We take due note of Germany's repeated declarations that she is inspired by nothing but purposes of defence, but the fact remains that the psychological reaction on others is to inspire suspicion of an offensive purpose.

5. I shall say to the German Ambassador that he will no doubt communicate my observations to his Government. I shall not ask in terms for a reply and you of course will also speak under the same reserve; but our language should be such as to lead to some response hereafter.

6. I shall tell the Ambassador that I am warning the French and Italian Governments (and the United States of America) before the debate of the fact that he will be making this statement.

7. You should give Herr Hitler the same information.

8. You should not yourself refer to the Saar, but if Herr Hitler does so you should say emphatically that we are not seeking in any way to link up this subject with the Saar. We have done and are doing and will do everything possible to promote the orderly carrying out of the plebiscite. (For your own information only, I shall make this point plain to the French Ambassador but shall not volunteer it to Herr von Hoesch.)

<sup>3</sup> See No. 214.

## No. 216

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 27, 11.55 a.m.)*  
*No. 296 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 7976/20/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, November 27, 1934

Chancellor cannot receive me till this afternoon but meanwhile I have made to Baron von Neurath oral communication in the terms of your written instructions to me of yesterday.<sup>1</sup> I also read to him your telegram No. 222.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 215.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. paragraphs 3–7 of No. 214.

His Excellency assured me that the German government have not increased the numbers of men or weapons proposed by them to Mr. Eden in the Spring<sup>3</sup> except in one respect namely bombing aeroplanes of which they have built a certain limited number in view of the fact that their offer to dispense with bombers, provided other Powers did likewise, elicited no definite reply. He declares figure given by us of 1,000 military aircraft is greatly exaggerated and he would be obliged to issue a contradiction if that figure were quoted publicly. He also denies that the German army has yet reached the figure of 300,000 although he admits that is the eventual figure aimed at.

Baron von Neurath pointed out that it was impossible for Germany to continue in her undefended state after the French refusal to negotiate a convention and he quoted Prime Minister's recent words about an undefended country inviting attack.<sup>4</sup> I replied that what perturbed us at home was that Germany should have armed while conversations were in effect proceeding.

Baron von Neurath assured me that until April last Germany had no factories capable of producing military aircraft in any large numbers.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 201, note 6.

<sup>4</sup> This is evidently a reference to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's speech at the Guildhall on October 25 in which he was reported as saying: 'Assuming potential aggressors, a vulnerable nation with great possessions, whether for its good or evil, unarmed to defend itself if need be, might be an element in the creation of war rather than a contribution to the peace spirit and practice of other nations.' Cf. *The Times*, October 26, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Baron von Neurath's account of this interview is printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 356. In a minute of November 27 attached to Sir E. Phipps's telegram above, Mr. Sargent wrote: '(1) As regards the thousand aeroplanes, I was always rather afraid that if we quoted this figure we would be met with a flat denial by the German Government, which is what has now happened. As we don't wish presumably to provoke a newspaper controversy on this particular point, it would perhaps be as well if Mr. Baldwin did not in his speech tomorrow actually mention this figure. Meanwhile Mr. Baldwin's Private Secretary's attention has been called to this development. (2) The main points which concern us are two facts, (a) that the German Government have now for the first time officially informed us that they have violated Part V of the Treaty of Versailles and that they intend to go on doing so, and (b) that the German Government have asked for a resumption of the Disarmament Conference [see No. 217 below] in order presumably to legalise this re-armament. We have by our action precipitated what they no doubt always intended to do when "zero hour" [cf. No. 211, paragraph 3] was reached. . . .'

## No. 217

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 27, 12.15 p.m.)*

*No. 297 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 7979/20/18]*

*Immediate*

*BERLIN, November 27, 1934*

My telegram No. 296.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he hoped disarmament conversations could be resumed when Saar question is over and he felt more hopeful about

<sup>1</sup> No. 216.

this latter in view of reasonable attitude of French experts now discussing at Rome.

His Excellency knows Monsieur Laval personally and hopes that he and Monsieur Flandin will (always after the Saar) consent to enter into direct conversations with German Government—a thing that their predecessors refused to do.

### No. 218

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 27, 2.10 p.m.)  
No. 298 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 7980/20/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, November 27, 1934

My telegram No. 296.<sup>1</sup>

Chancellor will receive me this evening at 6.30 Greenwich time.

<sup>1</sup> No. 216.

### No. 219

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 27, 4.50 p.m.)  
No. 301 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8009/20/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, November 27, 1934

Following from Air Attaché for Air Ministry (D.O.I.).

Respectfully urge most strongly that an exaggerated figure for German aircraft should be most carefully avoided by the Government in the House of Commons tomorrow.<sup>1</sup> The effect would perhaps encourage Germany to build up to an exaggerated figure and might postpone lifting of secrecy which I am convinced is imminent after conversation last night with Milch<sup>2</sup> and conversations this week by naval and military attachés. Suggest necessity to discriminate clearly between service aircraft actually incorporated in<sup>3</sup> German airforce corresponding to our initial equipment and aircraft of potential military value but at present in bona fide use by Luft Hansa.<sup>4</sup> My strong opinion is that the former do not exceed 600 today. I have this partly by calculation from petrol consumption (see my A.A.561-34)<sup>5</sup> taking 500 h.p. aeroplanes as average type. These remarks apply strictly to position actually today in peace time and not to future strength in the event of war. I fully realise that you may have fuller information.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 208, note 9.

<sup>2</sup> State Secretary of the Reich Air Ministry.

<sup>3</sup> This word was deleted on the filed copy but appears to be necessary for the sense.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. by German civil airlines.

<sup>5</sup> Not traced in Foreign Office archives; cf. No. 201 (3).

## No. 220

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 27, 5.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 299 Telegraphic [C 8036/247/18]*

BERLIN, November 27, 1934, 4.56 p.m.

Your telegram No. 219.<sup>1</sup>

There has always been a section of opinion here in favour of maintaining Treaty of Rapallo<sup>2</sup> as basis of relations between Russia and Germany. Military in particular view with anxiety the undisguised hostility of Russia towards present régime. Rumours have recently been current that German Government had instructed press to abstain from hostile comment and were arranging to provide Soviet Government with a substantial credit. While it is true that press has been muzzled for some time past I have been unable to obtain any confirmation of rumours regarding a recent instruction to the press or a credit.

Generally speaking I can detect no evidence here of any attempt by Government to reach an understanding with Russia. German policy generally is to let sleeping dogs lie until army is reorganized. New Soviet Ambassador<sup>3</sup> I am told expresses disappointment at manner in which his mission has begun. This grievance has been aggravated by recent arrest of his butler and chauffeur on a charge of communistic activity.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of November 26 repeated to Berlin the first paragraph of No. 200.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 1, note 8.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Jakob Suritz had presented his credentials to Herr Hitler on October 26.

## No. 221

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 27, 9.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 302 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8010/20/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, November 27, 1934

My telegram No. 296.<sup>1</sup>

I made to the Chancellor in presence of Baron von Neurath the same oral communication that I had made to the latter this morning. Its effect was entirely different and indeed catastrophic.

The gist of Chancellor's excited outburst is as follows:—

Effect of statement of His Majesty's Government to House of Commons will be deplorable and calculated to render still more difficult any agreement. Germany cannot consent any longer to allow other States to wipe their boots on her. Chancellor is tired of making repeated advances to France which only result in furious French press campaign of calumny against him. He had always declared his readiness to come to an agreement with Great Britain and the only result was this statement expressing perturbation at German armament when complete silence was maintained over monster

<sup>1</sup> No. 216.

armaments of France and Russia. In this connexion the Chancellor declared excitedly that he knew for certain by information received from a source in Moscow that Franco-Russian military alliance was an accomplished fact. (This I absolutely denied and remarked that it was in order to avoid it that France had been and still was willing to join an eastern pact). Chancellor shouted that in face of that alliance he was determined to proceed with his rearmament for if he were attacked by France or Russia nobody would come to his assistance and League of Nations would at most pass a vague and useless resolution. Great Britain in Germany's place would act exactly as the latter is doing. He could safely say that he was now confronted with possibility of 10,000 hostile military aeroplanes. All Germany's important factories were situated on her frontier and therefore specially liable to attack. Poland alone was sensible and realised that in view of Franco-Russian alliance she must turn to Germany. Why was Great Britain apprehensive of German defensive armaments when the terribly inflated and offensive armaments of France and Russia failed to impress her? My reference to warlike textbooks for German youths merely brought retort that I should read the French, Italian and Czech textbooks.

At intervals Baron von Neurath chimed in but his sole purpose seemed to be to out-Herod Herod. When I reminded him of hope he had expressed this morning regarding a more reasonable attitude from present French Government (see my telegram No. 297)<sup>2</sup> he brushed it lightly aside and referred, as did the Chancellor, to outburst of wrath in Paris over Herr Hitler's declarations to the two French ex-officers as published in the 'Matin' recently.<sup>3</sup> In such intervals as occurred in this noisy double attack I sought to inspire Chancellor with reasoned hope for a more favourable prospect for conversations at a later date but I met with no success.

Herr Hitler objected to recent remark regarding Rhine as England's frontier<sup>4</sup> and asked what we should say if he said Germany's lay on the Thames. I replied that to the west of the Thames Germany possessed no potential enemies whereas several powerful States besides Germany lay east of the Rhine, moreover meaning of phrase had been explained.

This awkward interview closed on a coldly polite note.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> No. 217.

<sup>3</sup> A reference presumably to Herr Hitler's conversation with two French politicians (M. Goy and M. Monnier) who recently visited Berlin in a private capacity. Their report of this interview was published in *Le Matin* of November 18. A summary of the report and of comments on it in the French press were printed in *The Times* (November 19, p. 12). According to *The Times*, the French press pointed out, e.g., that 'Germany is threatened by no one, yet she continues to arm, and her propaganda continues to preach war' and that Germany's conversion to peace, if sincere, could be proved by her returning to Geneva 'instead of seeking separate conversations with France which can only lead to the suspicion of shifts and manoeuvres'. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 359, note 10, and Nos. 311 and 321.

<sup>4</sup> A reference to Mr. Baldwin's statement in the House of Commons on July 30, 1934; cf. No. 26, note 4.

<sup>5</sup> A German account of this interview is given in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 358.

In minutes attached to this telegram Mr. Sargent wrote on November 28: 'I do not think we need take this outburst of Hitler's very seriously. Fortunately he did not in his tantrums

commit himself to anything irrevocable. The truth is that, as Sir Eric Phipps foretold, he is frightened of his flamboyant rearmament bringing about a joint front before he is ready to take the initiative himself (cf. Berlin telegrams Nos. 244 Saving and 303 [i.e. No. 190 and No. 226 below]).'

Mr. Eden minuted on the same day: 'The next step is clearly to talk to the French, but before doing so we should decide upon our course of action. Time presses for we must not lose control of the situation which we have assisted to develop.'

## No. 222

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 1324 [C 8085/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 27, 1934*

Sir,

I asked the German Ambassador to come to see me yesterday afternoon, but a mutually convenient interview could not be arranged till this morning. I told him that you had come over from Berlin to see us at the week-end and had now returned with instructions to make a communication on behalf of His Majesty's Government to Herr Hitler.<sup>1</sup> I hoped that your interview with him might take place this morning. I now wished to repeat to the Ambassador what you would be saying to the German Chancellor. My statement was to the following effect:—

2. We had been gravely concerned for some time past on the subject of German rearmament. Statements had been made in the French Chamber more than once on this subject, and to-morrow, when Mr. Churchill's amendment was being moved to the Address,<sup>2</sup> we should have to make a parliamentary declaration in this connexion. We wished, therefore, to inform the German Government in advance of our intention and of the general tenor of what we might say. I made it plain that His Majesty's Ministers had been anxiously considering this topic before hearing of Mr. Churchill's amendment, but pointed out that to-morrow's discussion could neither be postponed nor evaded and consequently controlled the time when our statement was made.

3. It appeared to us that the increase in the German army, together with its rearmament and the development by Germany of a military air force, were facts which were beyond dispute. Rumours had been prevalent for some time past that Germany was engaged on a large-scale reorganisation of her military forces. We believed that these rumours were founded on fact and that Germany was expanding her 100,000 long service army into a peace-time short-service army of 300,000 men. Our understanding was that this 300,000 army would comprise 21 infantry divisions, together with mechanised formations and reorganised cavalry. We were bound to assume that this expanded and reorganised army was, or would be, equipped with a wide range of modern weapons. Apart from this, the military potentialities of various organisations controlled by the Government could not be left out of

<sup>1</sup> See No. 215.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 208, note 9.

account. I added that this year's army budget made provision for the addition of 172 million reichsmarks, and this addition was defended by the German Government as being 'necessary in view of the preparations for the change over to a short-service army'.

4. As for air, His Majesty's Government had received information which left little doubt that Germany was at present actively engaged in creating a military air force of considerable size and of offensive capacity. As regards this last phrase, I observed that I was not speaking of the purpose but of the potentialities of the force. To-day, the number of aircraft of service types was believed to be not less than 1,000, including a number of bombers. Aerodromes were being rapidly constructed, and the output from Germany's aircraft industry had doubled within the last six months. Germany's air budget in 1932/3 amounted to 43 million reichsmarks. In 1933/4 this had risen to 78 million reichsmarks, and this year of 1934/5 to the surprising total of 210 million reichsmarks.

5. I impressed on Herr von Hoesch the extremely serious view which we took of the effect of all this on the mind of Europe. That effect was aggravated by the militaristic trend of German education and training. Whatever the purpose of these methods might be, it was the result they were calculated to produce which mattered. This was making a peaceful and agreed solution of the international situation more and more difficult. We were not apportioning praise or blame, and we took due note of Germany's repeated declarations that she was inspired by nothing but purposes of defence, but the fact remained that the psychological reaction on others was such as to inspire suspicion of an offensive purpose.

6. I said to the Ambassador that he would no doubt communicate my observations to his Government, for I wished them to be fully considered in order that they might be dealt with. I should be informing the French and Italian Ambassadors, and also the United States Ambassador, of our interview in the course of the day.<sup>3</sup>

7. Herr von Hoesch listened in silence till I had finished and then said that he much appreciated the manner in which we had framed our communication. Germany recognised that we had exerted ourselves in many ways during the last two years to bring about a settlement. In December 1932 we had taken the lead in securing the acceptance of the principle of equality—I interposed to correct the phrase by adding 'in a *régime* of security'—and the no-force declaration<sup>4</sup> went further than the Locarno or Kellogg Pacts. The MacDonald plan of March 1933<sup>5</sup> included proposals for consultation and in March 1934 we had pressed for guarantees of execution of the Convention and Germany was ready to agree.<sup>6</sup> After Mr. Eden's visit to Berlin,<sup>7</sup> the proposals then discussed were submitted to the French Government. It

<sup>3</sup> See Nos. 223–5 below.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, Nos. 170 and 183.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 48, note 4.

<sup>6</sup> See Volume VI, No. 366, for the German Government's attitude towards a guarantee of the observance of the proposed Arms Convention.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. No. 201, note 6.



was France who had throughout prevented the possibility of agreement. On April 17th of this year M. Barthou had broken off the negotiations on the excuse that Germany's military budget made agreement impossible.<sup>8</sup> In May we had made another effort by my own speech at Geneva,<sup>9</sup> and it was immediately blocked by the French. These things, the Ambassador urged, must be borne in mind, for they explained the present situation and showed that it was not Germany, or, indeed, Britain, that was to blame.

8. In reply to this, I made two observations: first, I said that Germany must not suppose that our present communication could be used to create or exploit differences between France and ourselves. Our concern was with the state of Europe as a whole, and in order to improve the condition of Europe all of us must make a contribution. Germany would make a great mistake if she thought she could use what we were now doing as a wedge to separate Paris and London. Secondly, I said that, while it was natural for the Ambassador to make a reference to past history, his sketch was not complete, and in any case I was more interested in the future than in the past. His sketch was not complete because he had omitted altogether what he well knew to be a fact, viz., that certain aspects of the present administration in Germany, since the advent of Herr Hitler, had deeply disturbed opinion in this country and elsewhere, including the views of many who had been disposed to feel sympathy with Germany. The Ambassador admitted that this was so. I said that in any case what we were now doing was intended as a contribution to bring about a better state of things in the future. I appealed to him most earnestly to help the beginning of a new chapter; what the end of that chapter might be nobody could yet say, but it rested with Germany quite as much as with us or anyone else to make the end of the chapter a happy one. If we could both help to bring that about, then we should have done something to improve European relations as a whole, and that was far better worth doing than seeking justification from past events or trying to find an opportunity for promoting division.<sup>10</sup>

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 208, note 2.

<sup>9</sup> On May 30, 1934; see Volume VI, No. 436.

<sup>10</sup> For Herr von Hoesch's account of this interview, see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 355.

## No. 223

*Sir J. Simon to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington)*

*No. 1022 [C 8088/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 27, 1934*

Sir,

I asked Mr. Bingham<sup>1</sup> to call this morning, and in the course of our interview I asked him to send a personal message from me to Mr. Cordell Hull

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Ambassador at London.

expressing my gratitude for his kind references the other day.<sup>2</sup> I called the Ambassador's attention to passages about Anglo-American relations in my broadcast to the United States on Armistice night,<sup>3</sup> which I thought the American Secretary of State might like to know of.

2. I told the Ambassador that relations between our two countries were so uniformly good that I did not have so many opportunities of seeing him as some other diplomatic representatives with whose countries we had more frequent difficulty. This was no reason why we should not meet more often, and I suggested we should try to establish an arrangement for a monthly talk in which I should like to discuss with him current European affairs so that he might transmit a periodic survey to the American President. Mr. Bingham expressed himself as very much pleased with this suggestion, and we will do our best to carry it out.

3. I then told the Ambassador, in outline, of the communication which we were making to-day to Germany (see my despatch No. 1324<sup>4</sup> of to-day's date to Sir E. Phipps) and of our reasons for it, and asked him to inform President Roosevelt. The Ambassador was good enough to say that he himself felt that His Majesty's Government had done every conceivable thing during the last two or three years to promote peace and agreement, and if the results up to date were not better, he was sure that the world outside did not regard this as our fault. He thought that the way in which we were raising the rearmament issue with Germany was very wisely chosen, and hoped that it might produce really useful consequences.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>2</sup> In a statement issued on November 23 the United States Secretary of State had commented favourably on Sir J. Simon's speech in the House of Commons on November 22 (295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 292-307). Cf. *The Times*, November 24, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> See *ibid.*, November 12, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> No. 222.

## No. 224

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Campbell (Paris)*

*No. 1826 [C 8086/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 27, 1934*

Sir,

I asked M. Corbin to see me to-day and informed him of the communication which I had just been making to the German Ambassador (see my despatch No. 1324 of to-day's date to Berlin)<sup>1</sup> and of the circumstances in which it had come to be made. I said that we had been considering the situation of German re-armament and the course which we should take in regard to it before Mr. Churchill had put down his amendment<sup>2</sup> and that if parliamentary exigencies had permitted we should naturally have wished to commu-

<sup>1</sup> No. 222.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 208, note 9.

nicate with the French Government more fully before addressing Germany. The Ambassador said that he quite understood that the circumstances which had arisen had not made this possible. I referred to the fact that the question of German re-armament had more than once been the subject of discussion and statement in the French Chamber and M. Corbin expressed the view that the French Government might very well feel pleased that we were now taking up a public position in regard to it. I told the Ambassador that if we had been free to choose the moment we should have preferred not to raise the matter by communication with Germany just at the time when the problem of the Saar was due for solution. We had no intention of linking our present action with the Saar in any way, for our one purpose in the latter matter was to do everything possible to promote a peaceful and agreed conclusion.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

**No. 225**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 1032 [C 8087/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 27, 1934*

Sir,

I asked Signor Grandi to see me to-day in order that I might inform him of the communication which we were making to Germany (see my despatch No. 1324 to Berlin of to-day's date)<sup>1</sup> and of the occasion for it. I asked him to explain to Signor Mussolini that a parliamentary debate of this sort could neither be evaded nor postponed and pointed out that we were obliged to answer the challenge which had been made by the statement as to German rearmament which I outlined to him. But, having made that statement, we were likely to be challenged as to the action we had taken in regard to it, and for this reason, if for no other, a communication to Berlin was necessary. In point of fact, we had been considering the subject before ever Mr. Churchill's amendment was announced.

2. I asked the Ambassador whether he thought the Italian Government could do anything to assist in securing that our communication was received in the spirit in which it was made and that in due course we received a helpful answer from Herr Hitler. Signor Grandi said that he doubted whether Italy, at the moment, could influence German action; it might have seemed at one time that a marriage was in contemplation, but a divorce had been pronounced before the marriage ceremony was performed. He expressed his personal view that our action was likely to produce very important effects. Signor Mussolini had made speeches about German armaments and there had been constant declarations on the subject from France. But a statement

<sup>1</sup> No. 222.

from this country was something different, for people felt that when Britain made up her mind to take up the subject she would not let go. I told Signor Grandi how much we should appreciate the help which it was in the power of Signor Mussolini to give. The question was not a question between this country and Germany at all; indeed, Germany had little or no complaint against us. The question was a European question, in which we were all vitally interested, and if there was going to be a peaceful future for Europe, then every great partner in the European system had a part to play.

I am, &c.,

JOHN SIMON

#### No. 226

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 28, 10.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 303 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8013/20/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, November 28, 1934

My telegram No. 302.<sup>1</sup>

Herr Hitler's irritation is probably due to fear for his own position. For weeks foreign press has been accusing Germany of rearming with prodigious haste. There is now to be a debate in the House of Commons and a fresh wave of public discussion everywhere. All this reacts on Herr Hitler's position for German public opinion is becoming restive in view of warlike rumours prevalent abroad. German public are aware that war material is being manufactured and that new barracks are being built. They are particularly apprehensive because no public statement has so far been made by Herr Hitler concerning extent of these preparations or the Government's programme. They therefore feel that foreign accusations are to some extent founded.

<sup>1</sup> No. 221.

#### No. 227

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 28, 11.35 a.m.)*  
*No. 305 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8016/20/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, November 28, 1934

Minister for Foreign Affairs summoned me this morning ostensibly to inform me of a correction he had made in a misleading press report from London concerning delivery of a note by me; but in reality I feel convinced to remove the deplorable impression made upon me yesterday by the Chancellor.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See No. 221; cf. No. 230 below.

This morning I again found a mild Baron von Neurath not unduly disturbed at the prospect of debate in the House of Commons and rather hopeful of an ultimate agreement with a new French government.

His Excellency said he had told the German press to lay stress on obligation His Majesty's Government were under to make a statement regarding German re-armament. I replied that as I had informed both him and the Chancellor yesterday, the concern felt by His Majesty's Government on the subject was real and grave and in no wise caused by the fact of the debate itself. However any lenitive instructions to German press could only be welcome.

**No. 228**

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon*

*(Received November 28, 11.10 a.m.)*

*No. 160 Telegraphic [C 8033/247/18]*

MOSCOW, November 28, 1934, 11.56 a.m.

Your telegram No. 131.<sup>1</sup>

There has, as was indicated in Mr. Charles' despatch No. 568,<sup>2</sup> been some nervousness here as to new French Government's attitude both as to Franco-German relations and as to Eastern Pact and a feeling that possibly French rapprochement to Soviet Union might not be as keen as it was. This stimulates their desire to get something definite signed with French before the Saar plebiscite which might, they fear, conceivably be followed by improved relations between France and Germany. French are obviously anxious to allay these apprehensions. My French colleague, whom I asked yesterday how matters stood as to pacts, said that they had by no means fallen into the water: of course attitude of Poland and of Germany was still uncertain: but Poland was now being approached again and Monsieur Laval had had very useful conversations with M. Litvinov.

Soviet press of course scarcely ever makes any comment upon Soviet policy or its orientation; and any public opinion which may exist cannot be expressed. But there has always been an impression here, as I may have indicated in reports of some months ago that a Franco-German *détente* would not be favourable to Soviet policy of obtaining her 'security' on western front and might anyhow seriously affect the policy of very close co-operation with France. Soviet 'security' to a great extent means that other Powers should be in bad relations with each other.

Moreover as indicated in last paragraph of above-mentioned despatch there has recently been increase of a restraint in Soviet press (except for a few days after Marseilles assassinations)<sup>3</sup> of criticism of Germany; and there are rumours (though I know of no grounds for them) of a weakening of

This telegram of November 26 repeated to Moscow the first paragraph of No. 200.  
No. 196.

<sup>2</sup> On October 9, 1934; cf. No. 137, note 4.

M. Litvinov's position in Kremlin Councils. Doubtless if his pact policy failed his position might be seriously affected at present and as I hinted in my despatch No. 391<sup>4</sup> there are probably some persons in the highest quarters here who are against being tied to France in any way. In any case I believe (especially if they are now less afraid of Japan than they were) Soviet's policy is not one of estranging Germany and that they would be glad of better relations with her as well as of an understanding with France and Poland. At the same time I have nothing to show that they have any idea of separate negotiations with Germany.

M. Archimbaud's reported declaration in French Chamber that Soviet army was offered to France in case of conflict with Germany<sup>5</sup> will not help matters as it may compromise M. Litvinov's position here.

German Ambassador remarked this morning that in his opinion French feelings towards this country are cooling off and added that Germany and Poland were in a similar situation as regards Eastern Pact. He said that Germany might be prepared to come in if it were radically altered in certain respects. I suppose therefore that a great deal depends on latest French note to Poland on this subject.<sup>6</sup> If the latter's reply is unfavourable question of Franco-Soviet military collaboration becomes a more actual one.

I am informed very confidentially that an official of Soviet censorship when asked by 'Daily Telegraph' correspondent two days ago denied emphatically that M. Litvinov's position was in any danger and said that on the contrary his stock was higher than before.

I should say that Soviet policy is to run with the hare and to hunt with the hounds.

<sup>4</sup> Of August 10; printed in Volume VII, No. 613.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Times*, November 24 (p. 12) and 26 (p. 11) for this reported declaration of the *rapporteur* of the Finance Commission of the French Chamber of Deputies during a debate on Army Estimates on November 23; cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 358, note 8.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 188, note 4.

## No. 229

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 224 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 7976/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 28, 1934, 2.5 p.m.*

You may think it well to inform Herr von Neurath that in view of his correction of our estimates in one particular yesterday<sup>1</sup> Mr. Baldwin proposes to modify his statement as to the number of military machines now existing in Germany by saying that one authority gives a figure of six hundred and from other sources we have an estimate of not more than one thousand. Our object is not to foment controversy on the facts but to help to remove doubts caused by secrecy.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 216.

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 29)*

*No. 254 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8045/20/18]*

BERLIN, November 28, 1934

My telegram No. 302<sup>1</sup> of yesterday.

When the Chancellor spoke of Germany not wishing to continue to serve as a door-mat, he savagely referred to recent anti-German demonstrations at Prague,<sup>2</sup> and to intolerable insolence of Lithuania towards Germany.<sup>3</sup> These references bode ill for the smaller Powers when once the Germans feel themselves strong enough to speak to them in truly German tone.

I naturally scouted the idea of an actually existing military alliance between France and Russia, and referred to the official French dementi but the Chancellor angrily declared he did not believe a word of it and that he had proof positive of the existence of such an alliance; in this he was supported by Baron von Neurath. I warned them not to attach too much credence to reports regarding this from Russian sources, for Russia's great wish was to conclude this alliance, and she might well desire them to believe in the 'fait accompli', whilst France wanted to avoid that contingency: hence the Eastern Pact project. My arguments fell flat, and Herr Hitler replied that the Eastern Pact would in any case only have rendered a military alliance easier to bring about. I gather he bases his conviction on a report from some secret source in Moscow.

In the course of our conversation the Chancellor bitterly reproached Great Britain for turning a deaf ear to the proposals he had made to her to reach a bilateral agreement over armaments, etc. I replied that what we wanted was a *general* agreement, not merely a bilateral one, whose only effect would be to transform Europe into two opposite camps as before the war. He made the customary declaration that he never contemplated building a navy against us, but in his torrent of words I thought I caught the figure of 35% as being the proportion of our navy that Germany would eventually claim the right to possess. The moment was not favourable, however, for a close examination of figures.

This was the first occasion upon which I had seen Herr Hitler for any length of time since the 'blood bath' of June 30th.<sup>4</sup> It has not increased his charm

<sup>1</sup> No. 221.

<sup>2</sup> These demonstrations had followed the recent issue by the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education of an order instructing the German University of Prague to hand over to the Czech University, in accordance with a law of 1920, all the insignia of the university. The German University authorities objected and conflicts ensued.

<sup>3</sup> The German Government had complained about infringement of the Memel Convention of May 8, 1924 (see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 119, pp. 502 ff.) and about discriminatory measures by the Lithuanian Governor of the Memel Territory against German inhabitants of Memel-land, including the dismissal on June 28, 1934, of Herr Schreiber as President of the Directorate. For documents relating to German-Lithuanian relations, July-December 1934, see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 67-8, 196, 219, 312, 341, and 384.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume VI, Nos. 473-8.

or attractiveness. Whilst I spoke he eyed me hungrily like a tiger. I derived the distinct impression that had my nationality and status been different I should have formed part of his evening meal.

As reported in my telegram No. 305<sup>5</sup> of today's date, at our further conversation this morning Baron von Neurath spoke to me again quite softly and not in His Master's Voice, the bad impression of whose strident tones, combined with his own raucous interjections last night, he seemed desirous of effacing. I took the opportunity of tackling him again on the subject of the Franco-Russian 'military alliance', and, when pressed, he admitted that 'it might not be a regular alliance, but the offer of the Soviet army has been made to the French, who have not declined it'.

I thanked Baron von Neurath for his communication but the impression he has made on me is that he is rather a poor creature, who roars rudely only in the Tiger's presence and out of it bleats like a lamb.

<sup>5</sup> No. 227.

## No. 231

*Minute by Sir J. Simon*

[C 8133/20/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, [undated]<sup>1</sup>

I. We may be attacked on the ground that since Germany left the Disarmament Conference in October 1933 we have done nothing but twiddle our thumbs and rush about to Geneva and back. In winding up the Debate self-justification should take a very small part, but I should have a note by the time the Cabinet is over dealing with this in the most effective way.<sup>2</sup> I do not require a document suggesting words like 'I must point out to the House' etc., but the essential facts and dates in concrete form (like a good pamphlet) with very brief connecting argument.

II. The sort of line which I may have to take is this: There have been criticisms in the course of the Debate and attacks upon our motives and our methods which do not seem to me to be deserved, but which, in any case, are not directed to the really important matter to-day. The occasion should be used for something better than an off-shoot of the Putney bye-election.<sup>3</sup> I am much more interested in the immediate future than in the post-war past. This should be the opening of a new chapter—a new chapter of co-operation and what would be the end of this new chapter does not depend entirely on us, but it does depend partly on us, and we mean to do our part. The re-opening of direct communication with Germany on the subject of armaments,

<sup>1</sup> This minute was evidently written or dictated by Sir J. Simon before the end of the Cabinet meeting on November 28, which preceded the debate in the House of Commons commencing in the afternoon at 3.29 p.m. Cf. No. 208, note 9.

<sup>2</sup> No relevant note has been traced in Foreign Office archives. Sir J. Simon's winding-up speech began at 10.39 p.m. on November 28; see 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 975–82.

<sup>3</sup> Polling in the Putney bye-election was taking place on November 28.



and at the same time consultation with some other Powers principally concerned is the vital fact. The choice before the world is between agreed and regulated armament and competitive and unregulated armament. Experience has shown that there are incredible difficulties in the way of securing and applying agreed limitations providing that those limitations should be sufficiently supervised. But what is the alternative which faces the world? We declare afresh, as we have declared before, for regulated limitation. And we ask the House and the country to help us to open a new chapter based, not on the prescriptions of the post-war period, but on new efforts to establish more firmly a securer prospect of future peace.

III. I think it is possible that we may be challenged about Herr von Ribbentrop. It may be said that we have had our opportunity and not used it—merely a polite call at the Foreign Office.<sup>4</sup> What is the effect of this? I saw in the newspaper yesterday an interview with von Ribbentrop when he left in which he insisted that he had only been paying a personal and private visit. Please look this up.<sup>5</sup> Herr von Ribbentrop, I understand, visited a number of people. Fullest opportunity both by Eden and me. Assured us of Germany's peaceful intentions. No indication that he had anything else to say. Germany represented in this country by a most competent Ambassador—I do not believe that it is in the interest of good Anglo-German relations to go behind his back and conduct two Foreign Offices at the same time.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Nos. 181 and 183.

<sup>5</sup> A note of November 28 by Mr. Wigram, seen by Sir J. Simon, said that 'Herr von Ribbentrop arrived in London about November 10th or 11th; and saw the Lord Privy Seal on November 12th and the Secretary of State on November 13th'. He referred to a press-cutting from the *Morning Post* of November 27, which said that Herr von Ribbentrop had 'been here on a "private" visit'.

## No. 232

*Mr. Torr (Riga) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 3)*

*No. 486 [N 6694/96/59]*

*Confidential*

RIGA, November 28, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to report that, having returned from Kovno yesterday, I went to see M. Munters<sup>1</sup> this morning to see if there was anything more that I could get out of him regarding the Lithuanian Memelland policy and the attitude likely to be adopted on the question at the forthcoming conference in Tallinn by Latvia and Estonia.<sup>2</sup> The conversation confirmed my

<sup>1</sup> Secretary-General of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> The first periodic conference provided for in the Treaty of Understanding and Collaboration between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, signed at Geneva on September 12, 1934 (*B.F.S.P.*, vol. 137, pp. 462-3), was to be held at Tallinn from November 30 to December 1. Cf. Volume VII, No. 629.

impression that the Lithuanian policy will not be strongly criticized by either. M. Munters thought it probable that the Lithuanians had accomplished as much as they had hoped to for the present. If the meeting of the Memel-land Chamber passed off quietly, we might perhaps hope for a return of calm for the time being. But eventually—he thought—the statute<sup>3</sup> would have to be revised.

2. I asked M. Munters what he thought of the various rumours and reports one hears from time to time of German military and semi-military preparations in East Prussia. He said that there were of course a lot of political exiles in that part of the world; but he belittled the likelihood of their causing serious trouble. On the other hand, a good deal evidently was being done there in the way of strategic military preparations *e.g.* the construction of bomb-proof aerodromes. But, he said, if the possibility of a German offensive at this end of Europe was to be regarded as at all a reality he thought it most unlikely that it would be launched through the Baltic States. A joint German-Polish offensive into Russia and the Ukraine was more probable.

I have, &c.,

C. J. W. TORR

<sup>3</sup> i.e. the Statute of the Memel Territory, Annex I of the Memel Convention of May 8, 1924; cf. No. 230, note 3.

### No. 233

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 29, 1.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 307 Telegraphic [C 8077/20/18]*

BERLIN, *November 29, 1934, 1.35 p.m.*

Belgian Minister tells me that German Foreign Office yesterday gave him a completely misleading account of my démarches with the Chancellor and the Minister for Foreign Affairs.<sup>1</sup> This account represented my language and attitude as deprecating and apologetic which it never was.

It is clear that German Government for reasons of prestige will seek to minimise importance of my action.

<sup>1</sup> See Nos. 216, 221, 227, and 230.

No. 234

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 29, 9 p.m.)*

*No. 374 Telegraphic [C 8079/74/18]*

ROME, November 29, 1934, 8.20 p.m.

My telegram 373.<sup>1</sup>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed me that considerable progress has been made in preparation of report of Committee of Three and that Germans have now agreed to most points at issue.

They confirm that December 5th was being reserved for consideration of the report and Italian delegation will be at the disposal of Mr. Eden or Mr. Strang December 4th should they wish to go through documents.

Repeated to Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of November 28, not printed, referred to No. 209 above and reported that the Committee of Three hoped 'to finish in "a few days" '.

No. 235

*Note by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs<sup>1</sup>*

*[C 8211/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 29, 1934

Now that the House of Commons' debate of Wednesday, November 28th, is successfully over,<sup>2</sup> we are left face to face with a fundamental question of policy which will compel us both to act, and to announce our action, very shortly in accordance with the way in which the question is decided. It is therefore very necessary to face the question and decide it in our own minds without delay. Temporising methods will not help us at all, and, indeed, a failure to come to grips with the problem now will very quickly lose for the Government the improved position resulting from Wednesday's debate, and will, in the end, fasten upon us a well-founded charge that the direction of our foreign policy in this respect is not clear and definite.

2. The question is that which I formulated in Cabinet some weeks ago, viz.:—

- (a) Are we prepared to contemplate the legalisation of German armaments? and
- (b) If we are not prepared to do so, what is our line going to be when Germany either demands their legalisation or announces that she has armed in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, and intends to continue to disregard the Treaty?

<sup>1</sup> This Note was circulated to the Cabinet Committee on German Rearmament (cf. No. 211, note 3) as GR (43) 3.

<sup>2</sup> The Amendment to the Address to H.M. the King (cf. No. 208, note 9) had been withdrawn; see 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 982.

To this might be added—

- (c) If we are prepared to legalise German re-armament, what are we to say to the French and when and how are we to say it?

3. The communication by Sir Eric Phipps to the German Government of the substance of the statements made by us in the House of Commons about German re-armament last Wednesday and the German answer to our Ambassador have created a position in which Germany, in effect, admits our allegation.<sup>3</sup> At any rate, the only figure which Herr von Neurath showed himself prepared to challenge was the figure of 1,000 aeroplanes, and in consequence of this challenge and of the advice of our Air Attaché, we modified our statement so as to avoid a denial.<sup>4</sup> Controversy between us and Germany as to the facts would do no good, and one of the principal merits of our recent communication and announcement is that it clears the air. It is possible that Germany may very shortly affirm positively that she has these arms—I understand that the German military authorities had already told certain visiting British officers that they were glad that the period of concealment was nearly at an end and that everything would be laid bare in February.<sup>5</sup> Now, if we may treat our public allegations of German re-armament as established or admitted facts, it follows that it is publicly avowed that Germany has broken, and is breaking, Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. I consider that one of the advantages of having communicated at the same time with France as to what we were about to announce<sup>6</sup> is that this fact must also now be treated as between France and ourselves as officially recognised. This may raise new difficulties with the French, but it is a definite gain to have moved away from the unreality created by pretending or imagining that the Treaty of Versailles could, in this respect, be made a restraining influence on Germany.

4. We may, I think, anticipate that the first concern of the German Government will be to get the Saar question settled. They will not want to hurry a possibly acrimonious discussion about re-armament until the Saar question is over. This gives us a little time, but none too much. It will be a very grave mistake if we postpone considering the really big problem set out above on the ground that we first want to see how the Saar question works out. Far better, if we can, to get some ideas formulated and thoroughly discussed now with a view to provisional agreement as to what our policy will have to be, even though that policy must be provisional and may have to be revised later on. Once the Saar question is disposed of, the German Government will wish to discuss the terms on which the signatories of the Versailles Treaty will legalise Germany's re-armament by cancelling Part V of the Treaty, or at any rate the Disarmament Clauses thereof. No doubt the idea would be that, in order to save everybody's face, such an arrangement should be embodied in a so-called 'Disarmament Convention'. I submit that we should proceed amongst ourselves on the assumption that the German

<sup>3</sup> See Nos. 216, 221, 227, and 230.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 201 (2).

<sup>4</sup> See Nos. 219 and 229.

<sup>6</sup> See No. 224.

Government intend at the moment most suitable to themselves to present a formal demand for legalisation. Since that demand, when put forward, cannot be resisted by force and will therefore be followed (either by agreement or by unilateral disregard of the Treaty) by the continuance and, it may be, the aggravation of the situation we have publicly announced, I suggest that it would be desirable that we should keep control of the initiative instead of leaving it to the Germans.

5. But it is not only the Germans who will very soon demand to know our view. We have informed the French, Italians, Belgians and Americans officially of our *démarche* in Berlin<sup>7</sup> and some of these Powers will make an even earlier enquiry of us. The French are already enquiring. It will probably be only a matter of days before we are asked by some of them what the result of our *démarche* has been. I see no reason why we should tell them of Herr Hitler's extravagant outburst, but we ought to be quite frank with them on the main subject, and this means that we must, as speedily as possible, know our own minds.

6. Are we going to tell the French that we are in favour of initiating disarmament conversations with Germany in order to find out what terms we can still obtain from Germany in return for cancelling Part V of the Treaty? If so, we must be prepared for strong resistance from the French Government, for there is nothing to show that they are at present educated up to the idea of legalisation. Indeed, Frenchmen appear to draw from the existence of a Treaty which is not being observed an amount of comfort and sustenance which are very difficult to understand. M. Herriot once said to me at Geneva that it might be that a ruffian meeting him in the street would take his watch from him by force, but that was no reason why he should give it to him. If we cannot persuade the French that legalisation is the inevitable outcome, and therefore should be anticipated now, are we prepared to go ahead on our own account and negotiate, or proclaim our willingness to negotiate, a cancellation of Part V with Germany? Of course, it ought not to come to this, for Anglo-French disagreement is not only bad in itself, but it encourages Germany. We ought, I think, to make much of the growth of British opinion in favour of this course. From this point of view, Mr. Lloyd George's speech the other night<sup>8</sup> seemed to me extremely useful. I presume that in any conversations with the French and Germans we should (at any rate in the first instance) treat the German offer of the 16th April<sup>9</sup> as still expressing their maximum requirements.

7. On merits, what is the argument against this course other than the very formidable argument that it may produce a severe strain in Anglo-French relations? That, of course, would be an event of capital importance, and this

<sup>7</sup> See Nos. 223-5. No record of an interview at this time with the Belgian Ambassador has been traced in Foreign Office archives. Copies of Nos. 222-5 were sent to Brussels on December 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> A reference presumably to Mr. Lloyd George's speech during the debate in the House of Commons on November 28; see 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 905-22.

<sup>9</sup> See Cmd. 4559 of 1934, No. 6; cf. Volume VI, No. 402.

single objection may be found to outweigh every other argument. But the other arguments seem to me to be strong. If the alternative to legalising German re-armament was to prevent it, there would be everything to be said for not legalising it. But the alternative to legalising it is for German re-armament to continue just the same, with the added complication that further increases are secret and that the sense of injustice and resentment continues to be stimulated. Abraham Lincoln<sup>10</sup> declared at the beginning of the American Civil War that the United States could not remain half slave and half free. And in the same way, the fact is that Europe cannot remain half bound and half free in the matter of armaments. The party that is bound has already burst his chains and nobody is going to put the shackles on him again. It is only when that party is conceded by the others the right to equality in the sense that we are either all free or all bound by agreed limitation, that any prospect of agreed limitations can arise. It may be said that if we take the positive step of giving Germany her release under Part V (just as we have already given her release from reparations, from the occupation of the Rhineland and from exclusion from the League), this will only hasten the day when she will bring up the next point, *e.g.*, territorial boundaries or German colonies. All these things will come in time no doubt, but I doubt whether we should really be hastening the pace by recognising the inevitable and getting such terms as we can while we recognise it. We followed the French for twelve years in holding on to reparations and no good came out of it. It is the case of the Sibylline Books.<sup>11</sup>

8. Another set of considerations which calls for very prompt analysis with a view to a decision is suggested by considering the line which the French Government may now take with us. We must be prepared for the French Government to take the line that, since the scales have at last fallen from the eyes of His Majesty's Government, and since we now realise the menace of German re-armament, we are assumed to be ready to allow our military and aeronautical experts to co-operate with those of France in drawing up a formal indictment which both countries can then present to the League under Article 213 of the Treaty of Versailles. This is, in fact, the course provided by the Treaty for dealing with the situation which has now admittedly arisen. Up till now the French have not actually urged it, for the same reasons that have prompted His Majesty's Government to remain silent about German re-armament as long as possible. We have come to the conclusion that there is no advantage in remaining silent any longer, and, indeed, that there is an added danger in doing so. But now that the question has been officially placed on the table, and now that Germany has officially confessed that she is re-arming in violation of the Treaty, the French may argue that the only proper and legal course to adopt is to take the matter to the Council in the manner laid down in the Treaty.

9. Are we prepared to agree to this course? The objections to it are obvious. It would lead to immediate deadlock; it would reveal afresh the

<sup>10</sup> President of the United States, 1861-5.

<sup>11</sup> i.e. the effect of delay is that the same price has to be paid for diminishing returns.

impotence of the League of Nations; and it would practically force Germany into open repudiation and into the rousing of German opinion in a most dangerous fashion, for it is, of course, inconceivable that Germany would submit to a League 'investigation' such as Article 213 envisages.

10. Even supposing that the French realise this as clearly as we do and do not press the matter, we must be prepared for them to insist on our discussing with them some alternative procedure in its place, and I am afraid that any such discussions would bring us back on to the old ground of French security.

11. This paper does not profess either to cover the ground or to put forward a conclusion. My object is to call the immediate attention of my colleagues to the overwhelming importance of facing these questions immediately. At the risk of formulating a provisional view without adequate consideration and without the advantage of full consultation with others, I tentatively advance the following propositions:—

- (i) Apart from the enormous difficulty raised by its effect on Anglo-French relations, the best course would be to recognise that Germany's re-armament in breach of the Treaty is a fact which cannot be altered and to reach the conclusion that this had better be recognised without delay in the hope that we can still get, in return for legalisation, some valuable terms from Germany. Germany would prefer, it appears, to be 'made an honest woman'; but if she is left too long to indulge in illegitimate practices and to find by experience that she does not suffer for it, this laudable ambition may wear off.
- (ii) The main condition would be that Germany would return to Geneva both for the Disarmament Conference and for League purposes. I do not think it would be possible to get Germany to return on the basis that she was still bound by Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, but that release would come as soon as a new agreement was negotiated. Germany is certain, I consider, to require the release to take place concurrently with her return. Equality of rights will then be an established and admitted fact. It may be possible for us in the course of negotiations for bringing this about to get certain understandings with Germany, *e.g.*, the limit she will accept for her navy, but broadly speaking she will want to be free first and to negotiate afterwards.
- (iii) To all this the French will reply 'security.' (They will also protest that wrongdoers and blackmailers should not be given the fruit of their wrongdoing, but all this must be rejected on the two grounds that British opinion will not stand for it and that the practical results of continuing to take this line are disastrous.) As to security, is it possible to get Germany to look more favourably on the Eastern Pact? I doubt it, for Chancellor Hitler likes bilateral agreements on the model of the German-Polish Pact, but he suspects multilateral pacts. We might perhaps do what we could in discussion with Germany to get her to make this contribution as a way of reaching equality of rights, but if it fails, it looks as though the Franco-Russian agreement

(which Herr Hitler asserts and Sir Eric Phipps denies),<sup>12</sup> may be the form of security which France will be left with.

- (iv) The grouping of other European Powers, if the above line were pursued with the French, is not difficult to imagine. It must, I think, be admitted that there would be a tendency to increase the division into different camps, and the difficulties and obstacles accumulate as one reflects. But what is the alternative? I cannot think that British public opinion will remain satisfied with the futility of ignoring the facts that German armaments are in breach of the Treaty. Once that it is avowed that they are and admitted on all hands that this cannot be prevented, there will be an increasing demand to get rid of the lumber while it may still fetch a price. And the retribution if we do not adopt a definite policy in regard to this, whatever that policy should be, will be severe.

J. S.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. No. 221.

## No. 236

*Mr. Campbell<sup>1</sup> (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 30)*

*No. 323 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8082/20/18]*

PARIS, November 29, 1934

Debate in House of Commons yesterday is chief news today in the French press which publishes very full summaries of all the important speeches. Comment in the morning papers is still comparatively scarce but will be taken up tomorrow morning following the lead given by the 'Temps' tonight.

2. Great satisfaction is expressed in all quarters at the clear warning to Germany given by Mr. Baldwin whose speech,<sup>2</sup> it is realised, was equally intended for the education of British public opinion. Some regret is expressed that the warning should have come so late, and the complaint is made that His Majesty's Government appear to be more concerned at the secrecy of German re-armament than at the fact of the re-armament itself.

3. The belief is held in some quarters that the speech when coupled with your own statement<sup>3</sup> was really an invitation for a resumption of negotiations, a prospect which is regarded with some misgiving.

4. Attention is now directed to Germany and Herr Hitler's reaction is eagerly awaited.

5. I will inform you shortly of the impression created in official quarters.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Campbell was in charge of H.M. Embassy, Paris, from November 29 to December 3 during Sir G. Clerk's visit to London to attend the wedding on November 29 of H.R.H. the Duke of Kent and Princess Marina of Greece.

<sup>2</sup> See 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 872-85.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 975-82.



*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 30)*

*No. 324 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8084/247/18]*

PARIS, November 29, 1934

I asked M. Laval yesterday evening, at an interview which I had solicited for that purpose, whether anything of note had transpired, at the various meetings which he had been having with M. Titulesco and Tewfik Rushdi Bey.<sup>1</sup>

2. He replied that the fact of the matter was that Paris was a more agreeable place than Geneva in which to kick one's heels; though he had had protracted conversations with M. Titulesco and Tewfik Rushdi Bey they were no more than a continuation of those which had taken place in Geneva and added nothing of moment thereto. When I observed that the press was talking of a Franco-Turkish pact, M. Laval said there was no question of anything of the kind. The upshot of Tewfik Rushdi Bey's remarks had been no more than a plea to co-operate in a more intensive way in European affairs; he would like Turkey to join in any Eastern pact of mutual assistance, in any Mediterranean [*sic*] pact, indeed in anything and everything in which she could play a useful part. M. Laval considered this to be quite a laudable desire.

3. We also touched briefly on the following questions: *Saar*. M. Laval said that he proposed in present circumstances to keep the debate on the Foreign Office estimates, which was due to open on Friday,<sup>2</sup> within the narrowest possible limits, but that he would have nevertheless to answer a number of questions. If asked what his attitude was a[s] regards the possibility of a second plebiscite he would say, as an expression of his personal opinion, that if the inhabitants of any part of the Saar territory which might have voted for the continuance of the status quo were subsequently to express a wish for re-integration with Germany the Council of the League would be justified in giving effect to that wish and France would not oppose it. I said I thought his words might lead to inferences being drawn as regards other hypotheses, and reminded him of your attitude towards the question of a further plebiscite.<sup>3</sup> He protested that he was the last to wish to create an Alsace-Lor[r]aine question in the inverse sense. The fact is—and he hinted as much—that he feels obliged to say something on the lines indicated in order to meet the criticism, which has been freely levelled against him in certain quarters, that he is relaxing the policy expressed in the Barthou memorandum.<sup>4</sup>

4. He once again repeated that he intended to ask the Council to make plain the international character of any police operations which might have to be undertaken during the plebiscite on the receipt of an S.O.S. from the Governing Commission. He asked whether I thought His Majesty's

<sup>1</sup> M. Titulescu and Tevfik Rüstü Bey had arrived in Paris from Geneva on November 25; cf. No. 202.

<sup>2</sup> November 30.

<sup>3</sup> See Nos. 185 and 198.

<sup>4</sup> Of August 31, 1934; see No. 75, note 16.

Government would do something to help in that respect. I said nothing to encourage him in this hope.

5. *Eastern Pact of Mutual Assistance.* M. Laval repeated what he had already told Mr. Eden as regards the understanding with M. Litvinov,<sup>5</sup> and went on to say that he was thinking of making an announcement of the fact during the debate. There had been so much speculation in the press that it was desirable to put the matter straight. I asked whether he did not think that a public statement would not be taken by Germany as a shot directed at her and thus lead to a further increase of friction. He replied that he would not mention her by name and would couch his statement in the most diplomatic language possible. Germany would of course know that she was the Power which both parties had in mind, but she could hardly take legitimate exception. Moreover, when she realised that she could not hope for a considerable time to detach either France or Russia, she might become more disposed to participate in the proposed Eastern pact.

6. *The Yugoslav appeal to the League.*<sup>6</sup> M. Laval, after hinting that France was under the necessity of doing something in support of Yugoslavia if she was not to give the impression of having completely abandoned her said that he was considering the feasibility of proposing some form of international agreement for the regulation of the right of asylum. The form which such a proposal might take was being studied by his legal advisers.

7. *Franco-Italian negotiations.* M. Laval expressed himself as pleased with the first reception by Italy of his concessions in the African question.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See No. 200.

<sup>6</sup> See No. 202, note 3.

<sup>7</sup> See No. 200.

## No. 238

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 30, 3.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 376 Telegraphic [C 8119/20/18]*

ROME, November 30, 1934, 2.40 p.m.

Government statements during armaments debate in the House of Commons on November 28th have been reported with marked approval in Italian press but there has been no editorial comment so far.

## No. 239

*Mr. Murray (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received November 30, 10 p.m.)*  
*No. 377 Telegraphic [C 8125/74/18]*

ROME, November 30, 1934, 9.25 p.m.

Your telegram No. 373.<sup>1</sup>

Report only exists at present in draft form and Ministry of Foreign Affairs state that while agreement in principle has been reached on all major points

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 234, note 1.

details still have to be worked out. In particular no definite solution of financial problem and disposal of mines has yet been found. Efforts to persuade head of the League of Nations Department<sup>2</sup> to let Embassy have a copy of existing draft proved unavailing.

Incidentally it seems probable when Italian Delegation arrive at Geneva next Tuesday morning<sup>3</sup> they will not bring an absolutely final text with them but will probably devote Tuesday morning to giving finishing touches to report. They are therefore particularly anxious that Mr. Eden should if possible be present at Geneva on Tuesday.

Repeated to Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> Of the Italian Foreign Office; Signor Biancheri.

<sup>3</sup> December 4.

## No. 240

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 1)*

*No. 325 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8124/20/18]*

PARIS, November 30, 1934

My telegram No. 323 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Press continues to comment at length upon House of Commons debate on German re-armament. The general tone is one of disappointment at what is regarded as its inconclusive character. Such a formidable indictment should, it is felt, have been followed by something stiffer than a veiled invitation to negotiate. The views of Mr. Churchill as to the position in Germany are accepted here rather than those of Mr. Baldwin and the latter is held to have let the Germans off too leniently, firstly by understating the degree of re-armament and secondly by not condemning it in sufficiently strong terms. This view is not shared by the 'Temps' but it appears in 'Figaro' and other papers of the Centre and Right.

2. Left press in general fears that Germany may be encouraged by Mr. Baldwin's words to seek to re-open negotiations for the purpose of legalising her armaments. Exceptionally, Socialist 'Populaire' expresses a guarded approval of debate. It praises your speech but observes that agreed limitation of armaments cannot be secured until the problem of collective security as a whole has been settled.

<sup>1</sup> No. 236.

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 2, 10.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 309 Telegraphic [C 8150/20/18]*

BERLIN, December 2, 1934, 9.32 p.m.

French Ambassador tells me that he had a conversation yesterday with Herr von Buelow of which the following is the gist:

Herr von Buelow said that the debate in the House of Commons and Mr. Baldwin's speech on the question of German re-armament . . .<sup>1</sup> with too great suddenness, brutality and publicity. The matter should have been allowed to rest until after the Saar. On the other hand he approved of Monsieur Laval's speech in Chamber<sup>2</sup> and described it as moderate, wise and hopeful. French Ambassador replied that the German Government should give some sign of life in reply to Mr. Baldwin, yourself and Monsieur Laval; but Herr von Buelow said this could only be after the Saar.

All this combined with Herr Hitler's fury, as shown to me direct,<sup>3</sup> appears hopeful for it proves that the Germans were disturbed in their plan for taking the initiative after the Saar when their reactions would probably have been more violent whereas now they feel themselves doubly cramped (1) by impending Saar vote and (2) by their present unreadiness, even from purely defensive military point of view. I remain convinced that if faced by a united Anglo-Franco-Italian front they will listen to reason.

The French Ambassador warned Herr von Buelow that in the contrary event and should armaments race ensue the Germans would find themselves swamped from the financial point of view, and in a still less favourable position. Herr von Buelow admitted this and reiterated Germany's keen desire for a convention limiting our armaments: he also indicated that she would later on be ready to discuss security.

The German game is childlike in its simplicity and duplicity. It consists in abusing France to England (vide your conversation with the German Ambassador of November 27th)<sup>4</sup> and England to France (vide Herr von Buelow to the French Ambassador).

The effect of our debate has I think been excellent and several neutral and impartial persons have expressed to me warm admiration for the statesmen-like utterances of the British Government's spokesman<sup>5</sup> and their conviction of the timeliness of the debate itself.

<sup>1</sup> The text is here uncertain. The reference is to the debate in the House of Commons on November 28; for Mr. Baldwin's speech cf. No. 236, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> For the principal points in M. Laval's speech in the French Chamber of Deputies on November 30, see *The Times*, December 1, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 221.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 222.

<sup>5</sup> A printed text of this telegram here reads: 'the statesmanlike utterances of the British Government's spokesmen'.

No. 242

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 3, 2.25 p.m.)*  
*No. 310 Telegraphic [C 8164/20/18]*

BERLIN, December 3, 1934, 2.22 p.m.

My telegram No. 308.<sup>1</sup>

Impression made by debate is still somewhat confused as no definite line seems to have been laid down for the press. Moderate tone of speeches has caused surprise and relief in quarters where it was feared that Germany might be arraigned for breach of treaty of Versailles. Fact that according to German press Paris is dissatisfied has also had its effect.

On the other hand Mr. Baldwin's criticisms of this régime and its policy has aroused resentment in party circles. From motives of amour propre there is a tendency to minimize the importance of the debate and its effect on German policy.

It is note-worthy that press generally has ignored both Mr. Baldwin's declaration that in no circumstances will His Majesty's Government allow Germany to build an air force larger than Britain[s] and his tribute to efficiency of British air force.

Above these conflicting sentiments one thing stands out. There is a general feeling that the debate has legalized German re-armament and that His Majesty's Government are ready to acquiesce in re-organisation of army in 21 divisions and formation of military air force up to total of 1,000 machines. Germany can now proceed with her plans without danger of intervention. This sentiment was reflected on stock exchange where there was a slight rise in shares of arms producing firms.

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram, not printed, telephoned to the Foreign Office at 4.35 p.m. on November 30, Sir E. Phipps indicated briefly the comments of leading German newspapers on the debate in the House of Commons on November 28 and said that 'comment in the Nazi press is restrained and the press generally is not disposed. . . to take the debate tragically'.

No. 243

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 4)*  
*No. 328 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8183/20/18]*

PARIS, December 3, 1934

During an interview this morning with M. Léger, whom I had been unable to see before owing to his having been entirely occupied for the last three or four days with the debate on foreign affairs, I endeavoured to ascertain the opinion held in official quarters in regard to your recent representation to the German Government.<sup>1</sup> Both M. Flandin and M. Laval whom I had tried to draw in the course of casual conversation had looked down their noses and seemed disinclined to discuss the subject.

<sup>1</sup> See Nos. 222 and 224.

2. M. Léger said that his department had been profoundly impressed by the passages relating to German re-armament contained in the speech delivered by Mr. Baldwin<sup>2</sup> whom no one could accuse of being unduly bellicose. On further study of the speeches there had crept in a slight feeling of uneasiness lest Germany should regard your move as an invitation to resume negotiations and seize the opportunity to put forward fresh proposals of an unacceptable character designed to drive a wedge between Great Britain and France. What the French Government feared above all was a repetition of the interminable discussions which had finally come to naught and during which Germany had played off Great Britain, France and Italy one against the other. I said I felt sure that that would be equally unwelcome to His Majesty's Government, but that, while your move was in no sense a direct invitation to Germany to re-open negotiations, it none the less created a new situation in that it was the first time that His Majesty's Government had publicly expressed themselves so openly in condemnation of unilateral re-armament by Germany. If, as a result of that new situation Germany were to show a disposition to discuss the armaments problem in a reasonable spirit I imagined that everyone would welcome it. In such event I felt certain that you would take no definite step without consultation with the French Government. This appeared to reassure M. Léger to some extent, but only to some extent. There is undoubtedly no inclination here at present to resume disarmament discussions with Germany in the absence of evidence of a real change of heart on her part.

3. We also discussed the following subjects:

*Eastern Pact.* Contrary to what we had previously understood, M. Léger said that the French Government had decided that the time had come to force the pace. Parliament and public were beginning to look askance at these prolonged negotiations which seemed never to lead anywhere. M. Beck was going to be in Geneva and M. Laval would take the opportunity to tell him that he must now express himself definitely one way or the other on the principle of the scheme. He hoped very much that he would receive the support of the British representative in his endeavours to induce M. Beck to play up. If the answer were favourable a note, somewhat similar to that recently delivered at Warsaw,<sup>3</sup> would at once be addressed to the German Government with the design of overcoming their objections. It was not expected that any answer would be given until after the plebiscite, but, if that went off quietly, there was no reason why the German Government, who would have had some weeks in which to study the question, should not reply shortly afterwards. If, owing to the maintenance of either Polish or German objections, it proved impossible to conclude an arrangement on the lines at present proposed, the French Government would try something else—some other combination with the same group of Powers, modified so as to overcome the objections of the recalcitrant ones. Conceivably, for instance, it might be necessary to omit the provision for mutual assistance, which was one of Germany's principal objections. Anyhow, one way or another the

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 236, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 188, note 4.

French Government would persevere in the attempt to organise some collective scheme designed to restore confidence between its signatories. Only if everything failed, would they be compelled to consider the question of a bilateral arrangement with Russia—an eventuality which they sincerely trusted would not arise. In the meantime M. Laval hoped in Geneva to clinch with M. Litvinov the understanding whereby neither France nor Russia would enter into any separate bilateral negotiation so long as the discussions for a collective arrangement were in progress. The object of that understanding, on the French side, was (a) to prevent the Soviets from claiming that the time had come to discuss a bilateral arrangement, (b) to prevent them, if the tendency went that way, from making separate overtures to Germany. The possibility of one or other of those contingencies was also a reason for forcing an early answer from Poland.

*The Yugoslav action at Geneva.* I told M. Léger what M. Laval had said to me the other day about his idea of putting forward an international convention for the regulation of the right of asylum.<sup>4</sup> M. Léger said the expert study of this question was a longer business than had been thought, involving as it did, consultation with the Ministry of Justice. In any case it had been decided not to put forward the suggestion now though the French Government might reserve it for a later phase. I gather it had been decided to drop the idea for the moment for the reason that Yugoslavia would regard it as an attempt to burke, or at least defer, the issue and consequently feel that she had been abandoned by her ally. From that and other indications I think we must expect France to go a considerable distance in support of Yugoslavia at Geneva. The French Government have done a lot to counsel calm and moderation (notably in the manner of wording the Yugoslav memorandum)<sup>5</sup> but can do no more (at all events not in any prominent way) without antagonising Yugoslavia and losing all further influence.

4. *Herr Ribbentrop's visit.* See my immediately following telegram.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 237, paragraph 6.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 202, note 3.

<sup>6</sup> No. 244.

## No. 244

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 4)*

*No. 329 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8182/732/18]*

PARIS, December 3, 1934

M. Laval, hearing that I had asked M. Léger this morning what had transpired between him (M. Laval) and Herr von Ribbentrop, sent me a message to ask me to go and see him this afternoon that he might tell me the story in his own words.

2. He began by explaining how the interview had arisen. Herr von Ribbentrop had come here apparently to take [*sic*] fresh contact with his 'anciens combattants' friends. He had sent an intermediary to say that he

would like to see M. Laval who had replied that it would seem more proper if the interview were applied for through the German Ambassador. Herr Köster had in due course applied and M. Laval had therefore been reluctantly compelled to receive the unwelcome visitor.

3. Nothing very noteworthy, M. Laval continued, had emerged from the interview. Herr von Ribbentrop had talked mainly of developing the ties between French and German ex-servicemen. M. Laval had made it plain that these methods were distasteful to the French Government as they were liable, as had recently been the case,<sup>1</sup> to become mixed up with internal politics in this country. The French Government would never refuse to listen to any overture but it must come through normal channels. Herr von Ribbentrop had said that he would shortly return with Herr Hess<sup>2</sup> and hoped that M. Laval would receive them. M. Laval had replied that he would not wish to do so unless they also visited London. He here interposed some remarks to the effect that it was, in his opinion, more than ever necessary at this moment for the two Governments to keep in the closest contact.

4. On M. Laval's side the interview, he told me, had been mainly confined to an attempt to persuade Herr von Ribbentrop that Germany would be wise to come into the Eastern Pact. Her economic situation was bad, if not desperate; if she would come back into the comity of nations there were no doubt things that could be done to help her which would be more valuable to her than armaments. Except in that indirect way the disarmament question had not been mentioned.

5. At the close of the interview Herr von Ribbentrop had somewhat pathetically pleaded that the communiqué should describe the interview as having been cordial. M. Laval had politely declined to oblige him in view of the wholly unofficial character of the interview. In general Herr von Ribbentrop had given the impression that he had no instructions from, and was not qualified to speak for, the Führer, and that his main preoccupation was to enhance his utility in his master's eyes.

6. M. Laval concluded by saying that he had had a useful conversation with the German Ambassador. He had, as we know, recently appealed through him to Herr Hitler to stop the anti-French campaign in the German press on the understanding that he (M. Laval) would do the same here.<sup>3</sup> The campaign in the German press had indeed ceased, but had been transferred to the radio. On M. Laval complaining, Herr Köster had said 'Oh, but you never mentioned the radio'. Both sides had now agreed to include the radio in the bargain<sup>4</sup> and M. Laval gave the necessary instructions by telephone in my presence.

Copy handed to the United Kingdom Delegation, Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 221, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> A Reich Minister and Herr Hitler's deputy.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 200, pp. 228-9.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, Nos. 367 and 370.



*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 4)*  
*No. 330 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8173/74/18]*

PARIS, December 3, 1934

My telegram No. 329.<sup>1</sup>

During the interview Monsieur Laval made a digression on the subject of the Saar, about which, incidentally, he said he now felt easier in his mind.

2. He renewed, in earnest terms, his appeal to His Majesty's Government to agree to participate in any police operations which might have to be carried out as the result of an S.O.S. from the Governing Commission. It would not be possible, he said, to make a very large [French] force available. On my raising my eyebrows he rang up the Minister of the Interior to ask what numbers could be counted on. The reply was 3,500 to 4,000 men. I said that having seen the 'garde mobile' at work during the February riots I should be sorry for anyone who came up against 4,000 of them. He laughingly agreed but reiterated his appeal that His Majesty's Government should in any case show the flag in some manner or another. He went on to develop the arguments with which you are already familiar.

3. He will certainly press his point very strongly at Geneva.<sup>2</sup>

Copy handed to United Kingdom Delegation, Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> No. 244.

<sup>2</sup> A minute to this telegram by Mr. Dew, a member of the Central Department, read: 'If a proposal which has been put forward is accepted by the Cabinet the gardes mobiles will not be wanted at all. A. R. Dew, 4/12.'

*Memorandum by Mr. Wigram<sup>1</sup>*  
*[C 8164/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 3, 1934

The 'approaches' made to the German Government by the Lord President, the Foreign Secretary and M. Laval seem to be as follows.

<sup>1</sup> In a minute of December 4 relating to Nos. 241-3 Mr. Wigram wrote: 'I have summarised in a memorandum within the "approaches"—if it is right to call them such—made to the German Government by the Lord President, the Foreign Secretary and M. Laval. They may perhaps be said to amount to:—

a) A request to Germany to "tear away the veil of secrecy and bring to light the things that are alarming Europe and we may discuss them", i.e. presumably to state what the rearmament is and ask for its legalisation;

b) The Lord President referred to "the breaking of the link at Geneva", so perhaps it may be said that the discussion is expected to take place at Geneva;

c) M. Laval said that "Germany will again be invited to join in the Pact for Mutual Assistance" and he added that "a sufficiently large and rigorous [*sic*] system of collective pacts would remain the necessary preface to an international agreement for the limitation and reduction of armaments". Presumably therefore in French eyes German participation in the Eastern Pact remains a condition of the legalisation of German rearmament.'

Mr. Baldwin said<sup>2</sup> that 'one of the foundations of the malaise today in Europe is not only fear but ignorance outside Germany and secrecy inside . . .<sup>3</sup> I will just express a hope that when these questions which we are debating today are considered in Germany they may ask themselves whether the price that they are paying in this mental condition of Europe is worth the secrecy that is being maintained and the breaking of the link at Geneva between her and her sister nations in Europe . . . Situated where Germany is she is more dependent than most of us on friendship and on trading with her neighbours. When will the day come when she will recognise that? May the opportunity come before long when she will tear this veil of secrecy away and bring to light the things that are alarming Europe, and we may discuss them and see what even now may be done.'

The Foreign Secretary said<sup>4</sup> that 'this country has taken the initiative in communicating direct to Germany. We proclaim at any rate that this is a world problem; and the solution of a world problem depends on agreement . . . It is no good unless we can get an agreement. If we can get it we should like agreed disarmament at a very low level—our draft Convention surely shows that. If we can get it so much the better, but if there is no possibility of that and we cannot get the unattainable ideal, we must seek to secure agreement at the lowest level at which it can be got.'

M. Laval (apart from his references to the Saar) said, according to Paris despatch No. 1832 of December 2nd,<sup>5</sup> that 'Germany had been invited and would again be invited to join in exactly the same conditions as the other countries in the Pact for Mutual Assistance, where she was assured of obtaining the same guarantees that she herself would grant to the other associated countries. Chancellor Hitler affirmed his wish for peace. France asked him to translate his words into acts by associating himself in the policy which she was pursuing in eastern Europe. . . . They wished to believe that Germany, at a time when she was affirming her desire for peace, would understand that in refusing to join in this policy of collaboration to which she was invited by all, she would only aggravate her moral responsibility in the eyes of the other nations. He would repeat it was a loyal invitation which was made to her . . . By the establishment of a sufficiently large and rigorous [*sic*] system of collective pacts, freely accepted, it might be possible to restore among nations that confidence which would always remain the necessary preface to the greatest human work, namely an international agreement for the limitation and reduction of armaments.'

<sup>2</sup> See 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 872, 874, 885.

<sup>3</sup> Punctuation in the extracts here printed is the same as in the original memorandum.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, col. 980.

<sup>5</sup> This despatch, not printed, summarized M. Laval's speech in the Chamber of Deputies during the debate on foreign affairs on November 30; cf. No. 241, note 2.

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 6)**No. 1026 [C 8292/20/18]*

ROME, December 3, 1934

Sir,

As I reported in my telegram No. 376<sup>1</sup> of November 30th, the Government's declarations on November 28th in reply to Mr. Churchill's proposed amendment were well reported in the principal newspapers, in messages which expressed the approval of the correspondents in London.

2. Only two editorial comments have appeared so far, and it seems unlikely that the pressure on space caused by the quick succession of events will permit of others.<sup>2</sup> In the 'Tribuna' of December 1st, Dr. Forges Davanzati said that the debate had shown that England did not consider herself cut off from Europe, and that in dealing with the question of German armaments she spoke not as an arbiter, but as one of the parties directly interested. The debate had been salutary in that the fact of German re-armament was openly recognised. The French press seemed anxious about such recognition, but discussion as to German re-armament being an infraction of the Treaty of Versailles was a mere waste of time. Fascist Italy regarded this recognition, that was the kernel of the debate, as a clarifying element which corresponded with Signor Mussolini's repeated appeals to look at things as they are.

3. 'Corriere Padano', Marshal Balbo's<sup>3</sup> paper, said (November 30th) that the debate was the most important event of the day. Care had been taken not to spring the attitude of the British Government upon Germany and the malicious might almost say that it had been arranged with Germany. What was one to deduce? It was clear that England was disturbed by German re-armament, but it was fantastic to suppose this meant she would join, for the moment at least, a 'continental system of resistance against Germany'. England was only preoccupied by German re-armament in so far as it threatened her own security, i.e. by air. As far as land armaments were concerned, she could display the generosity of one who was not directly menaced. If the declarations made on behalf of the Government had any real meaning, it was that England was proposing to take up disarmament discussions again, but on a different basis, that of a recognition of Germany's effective parity, except, of course, in the air. It was to secure this parity that Germany had left the League of Nations, and whatever else might be said of 'England's egoistic disarmament policy', it certainly put the seal on the efficacy of German tactics in abandoning the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference.

I have, &amp;c.,

ERIC DRUMMOND

<sup>1</sup> No. 238.<sup>2</sup> In his despatch No. 1039 of December 7 Sir E. Drummond corrected this statement and gave further extracts on the subject from a number of Italian newspapers.<sup>3</sup> Governor-General of Libya.

No. 248

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 4, 8.50 p.m.)*  
*No. 106 L.N. Telegraphic [C 8212/74/18]*

GENEVA, December 4, 1934, 8.35 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.<sup>1</sup>

Although I have of course not been able to take any soundings on the point I anticipate that view that Germany's consent is *legally* necessary for despatch of an international League force to keep order in the Saar will not receive general acceptance here. It will be maintained that though Germany still possesses bare sovereignty she does not possess anything else having renounced in favour of the League the government of the territory (Article 49),<sup>2</sup> that Governing Commission is responsible for protection of persons and property (paragraph 30 of Saar Annexe),<sup>3</sup> that Council is responsible for securing freedom, secrecy and trustworthiness of voting (paragraph 34) and that adoption of such measures as Council may decide to be necessary for discharge of these responsibilities cannot depend on Germany's consent.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden had arrived in Geneva on December 4.

<sup>2</sup> Of the Treaty of Versailles 1919.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. Annex to Section IV (Saar Basin) of Part III of the Treaty of Versailles.

No. 249

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 4, 11.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 109 L.N. Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8217/74/18]*

*Very confidential*

GENEVA, December 4, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden:

I saw Mr. Knox on my arrival here this evening. I read to him record of our previous conversation on the subject of maintenance of order in the Saar (see my telegram No. 104)<sup>1</sup> and I asked him whether I had clearly interpreted his mind in that telegram and what if any modifications he now wished to make on the opinion there expressed. Mr. Knox replied that my telegram exactly represented his point of view and that situation remained as he had then stated it to me. It was true that Committee of Three had settled many difficulties but assurances which he had asked for in respect of recruitment of his police had not yet been given him. (These I understood concerned pension rights without granting of (? which omtd.)<sup>2</sup> contingent of Dutch serving police which he had been promised could not reach him). Mr. Knox maintained that he could give no undertaking that he would not have to appeal for aid of French troops if no international force were available.

<sup>1</sup> No. 207.

<sup>2</sup> The text was here uncertain.

But he felt confident insofar as confidence was possible at all in dealing with the Germany of today that presence of an international force would in itself prevent disturbances arising. If on the other hand Council were to refuse to authorise use of French troops and made no alternative arrangements Mr. Knox stated that position would be one of gravest danger. It was only the threat of French troops that had enabled him to hold position in the Saar hitherto.

I then asked Mr. Knox whether he had informed the Committee of Three of his views. He replied that he had done so last March but that as he had previously informed me<sup>3</sup> Committee had thought it impossible to obtain necessary elements to make up an international force. He felt that it would be difficult for him at this stage to take the initiative at Council with a statement upon same lines as he had made to Committee of Three without giving offence to Baron Aloisi. Consultation in advance with Baron Aloisi would therefore be necessary. There was also point (though he did not attach very great importance to it) that a public statement volunteered by him at this juncture emphasizing dangers of situation in the Saar would be very badly received in Germany and he would be accused once again of taking an anti-German attitude and of spoiling chances of peaceful carrying out of plebiscite at the very moment when accord had been reached. He would of course be prepared to state his views if questioned by a member of the Council. Having explained his difficulty in taking the initiative before Council Mr. Knox was quite clear in maintaining his view that despatch of an international force to the Saar was by far the best method of avoiding disturbances.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 207.

## No. 250

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 5, 11 a.m.)*  
*No. 257 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8221/74/18]*

BERLIN, December 4, 1934

The successful outcome of the Saar negotiations in Rome<sup>1</sup> is greeted with a chorus of approval by the whole German press.

According to the 'Völkischer Beobachter' Germany has made concessions for the sake of Franco-German understanding—that great aim which she has constantly before her—and because she prizes peace not merely by word but by deed.

The newspapers pay a tribute to the skill of the Italians and the reasonableness of the French negotiators and express the belief that all fear of friction after the plebiscite is now dissipated.

Repeated to Geneva telegram No. 18 Saving.

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the Agreement signed by representatives of the French and German Governments in Rome on December 3, see *L.N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1703-5. Cf. No. 251 below, paragraph 2.

*Memorandum on the present position as regards the Saar*<sup>1</sup>

[C 8218/74/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 4, 1934*

On December 5th the League Council will meet at Geneva to consider the question of the Saar, when the report of its Committee of Three will be submitted to it. A copy of this report is not yet available in London; but such advance information as it has been possible to obtain regarding its contents indicates that there ought to be no difficulty to our agreeing to approve its terms. Our views on certain points of difficulty were communicated privately to Baron Aloisi some weeks ago<sup>2</sup> in the hope of preventing the appearance in the report of any expressions of opinion from which we should have to dissent.

2. Meanwhile Franco-German negotiations on matters of direct concern to the two countries have been proceeding in Rome under the aegis of the Committee of Three. It is reported in this morning's newspapers that an agreement<sup>3</sup> was signed at Rome on December 3rd by the French and German Ambassadors regulating various questions of a political, financial and economic character in the event of the Saar Territory reverting to Germany after the plebiscite. (The accuracy of this has been confirmed orally by the French Embassy who have been in telephonic communication with Paris). It appears that the outstanding features of this agreement are:—

(1) That France and Germany have agreed on a price for the mines returnable to Germany under the terms of the Saar Annex; the sum in question, it is understood, will be met from the proceeds of the French notes now in circulation in the Territory. Sums due in respect of public Saar indebtedness are to be met from the same source. This indebtedness includes the 1928 City of Saarbrücken loan, floated in London, which is the main, if not the sole, representative of those British financial interests in the Saar, for the safeguarding of which the Cabinet resolved on November 21st that steps should be taken when the Committee of Three's report was considered at Geneva. The proportion of the proceeds of the French notes which is apparently to be applied to the service of the Saar loans, is considered by Sir O. Niemeyer to be ample to cover such service at any rate for some years to come.<sup>4</sup>

(2) That Germany has agreed to give guarantees that for a specified limited period of time (believed to be one year), no measures will be taken against any member of the Saar population on account of his religion, language or race.

3. It is understood that the report of the Committee of Three does not deal with the question of the maintenance of order in the Saar. Much careful

<sup>1</sup> A note by Mr. Perowne states that this memorandum 'was prepared for the inf[ormation] of the S. of S. at this morning's Cabinet. J.V.P. 5/12.'

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Nos. 185 and 186.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 250.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Nos. 206 and 210.

consideration has been given to this matter here.<sup>5</sup> As recently as December 3rd, M. Laval renewed, in private conversation with Mr. Campbell, his appeal to His Majesty's Government to agree to participate in any police operations which might have to be carried out as the result of an S.O.S. from the Governing Commission under the Council Resolution of 1926.<sup>6</sup> (M. Laval in the Chamber on November 30th declared that France would ask the other nations to share with her police duties for any eventual re-establishment of order in the Saar.) Mr. Campbell states that M. Laval will certainly press this point very strongly at Geneva.

4. His Majesty's Government consider it undesirable that French forces should have anything to do with the maintenance of order in the Saar Territory and they have therefore resolved (1) that if the Council of the League should decide that it was desirable for an international force to be despatched for the purpose of maintaining order and the United Kingdom were invited to co-operate, then, provided other countries were prepared to make contribution, His Majesty's Government would also be prepared to provide a military detachment from this country on the express condition that both France and Germany agreed to this agreement. (2) That it is important that any force should be of as international a character as possible and should include, if possible, contingents from Belgium, Holland and Switzerland, as well as from the United Kingdom and Italy.<sup>7</sup>

5. The Lord Privy Seal has proceeded to Geneva with authority to handle this matter at his discretion. It is anticipated that Mr. Eden will make privately a communication on the lines indicated to the French and Italian representatives at Geneva, and that if the reaction is favourable this will be followed up with a subsequent public statement to the Council.

6. Mr. J. B. Browne, His Majesty's newly appointed Consul at Saarbrücken, has arrived in London from Madeira and proposes to leave for Saarbrücken on December 7th.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The Cabinet agreed at its meeting on November 28: 'Provisionally to adopt the suggestion that at the meeting of the Council of the League next week, the British representative should outline the difficult and dangerous position in the Saar and should indicate our view that the best course would be to send to the Saar a *bona fide* international force.'

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 245.

<sup>7</sup> The decisions outlined in this paragraph are a summary of those reached at a meeting in the Prime Minister's room at the House of Commons at 2.45 p.m. on December 3, which followed a meeting at the Foreign Office at 12 noon on that day attended by Viscount Hailsham (Secretary of State for War), Mr. Eden, and the Earl of Stanhope (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State), with Sir J. Simon in the chair. Lord Avon describes his part in these negotiations in *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators* (London, 1962), pp. 101-5.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 207, note 1.

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)**No. 1850 [C 8210/74/18]*FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 4, 1934*

Sir,

The French Ambassador asked to see Mr. Eden on November 30th. He said that he would have asked to see the Secretary of State but that he had learnt that he was in Scotland, and moreover since the Secretary of State had himself mentioned to M. Corbin at a previous interview that Mr. Eden had recently been handling Saar events at Geneva, he had asked to see the latter.

M. Corbin began by saying that the French Government were anxious as to the attitude His Majesty's Government might take up towards the report of the Committee of Three when the Council meets on Wednesday.<sup>1</sup> We had been good enough to tell the French Government of the views we had communicated to the Committee of Three<sup>2</sup> and the French Government hoped very much that we should not find it necessary to be too critical of their report when it was brought before the Council. Though it might be that juridically we might have misgivings on certain portions of it, the French Government were fearful of the consequences of any detailed criticism, since this might give Germany just the encouragement she needed to refuse to accept the report or to work its findings. More particularly, the French Government were reluctant to agree to any reference to The Hague Court of the question of guarantees for minorities. They thought that this procedure would be too slow, and after all whatever the decision of The Hague Court, the problem of the fate of these minorities would still be there and would have to be dealt with. There would be many refugees from the Saar after the plebiscite if the Saar voted for Germany. These would number thousands. Would England be prepared to take her share of them? He understood that the Committee of Three would have some proposals to make in respect of this problem of the minorities in the Saar after the plebiscite.

Mr. Eden replied that His Majesty's Government were as anxious as the French Government to be able to approve the report of the Committee of Three. We hoped to be in a position to support its findings, and we were fully conscious of the risks that must be run if we were to find fault with portions of the report. Mr. Eden hoped, however, that this would not be necessary and M. Corbin could be sure that we should approach the report of the Committee of Three with every desire to approve its findings. This was indeed why we had sent our observations to the Committee of Three before their report was drawn up, in an attempt to avoid the necessity for criticism in public at Geneva at a later date. At the same time, speaking personally, Mr. Eden said that he would regard it as unfortunate if the report contained any recommendations which Germany would have justification for

<sup>1</sup> December 5.<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 185.



challenging, since this would hardly strengthen the position of the Council in the long run. Mr. Eden had not, however, seen the report of the Committee of Three and he did not propose to anticipate that it would contain any such conclusions.

The Ambassador went on to speak of the Yugoslav memorandum.<sup>3</sup> Had we yet had time to study it and had we any observations to make upon it? Mr. Eden said that we had just received it and that the memorandum was at present under examination, but that there was no statement that he could make on the subject. Our hope was that the Council would not find it necessary to deal with the matter next week. If, however, both parties asked for it to be dealt with and postponement was impossible, we should at least be able to limit the discussion to a speech by either side and to the appointment of a *rapporteur*. M. Corbin seemed to agree with this, and Mr. Eden gathered that the French Government would help us in any way they could to pacify the partisans.

M. Corbin then finally spoke of the debate on Wednesday.<sup>4</sup> He said that he would not have raised the matter with Mr. Eden but would have waited until he could see the Secretary of State had it not been for the fact that he was confident that M. Laval would question Mr. Eden in the matter, and he thought that Mr. Eden might wish for an opportunity to consult with the Secretary of State before going to Geneva. When M. Corbin had seen the Secretary of State,<sup>5</sup> the statement which the latter had made to him as to the line to be taken in the debate was very clear and definite. One or two sentences, however, in the Secretary of State's speech and in that of Mr. Baldwin had seemed to go beyond what the Secretary of State had said to him, and he had come to ask if they could be explained, though of course his intention in doing so was in no sense critical. It might be that the policy that these sentences appeared to envisage would be beneficial. All he wished for was to be clear as to what was in our minds.

The Secretary of State had told M. Corbin when he saw him that Sir E. Phipps had been instructed to make it plain to the German Government that His Majesty's Government did not expect any answer from the German Government to their communication to Berlin. In his speech, however, the Secretary of State had referred to the debate as creating 'a new situation'. Mr. Baldwin had also done so. M. Corbin did not understand what meaning this phrase could have unless an answer was in fact expected from the German Government. It almost seemed from the tone of certain passages in these two speeches as though Germany were being invited to resume conversations. He did not wish to criticise that proposal, but only to point out that it did not seem to tally with what he had understood was to be said in the debate. On the general proposition of conversations with Germany, the Ambassador remarked that while M. Flandin and M. Laval might be relied upon to take a broad view as to these, Mr. Eden would not forget how

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 202, note 3.

<sup>4</sup> A reference to the debate in the House of Commons on November 28.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 224.

strongly French public opinion was opposed to any legalisation of German rearmament.

Mr. Eden replied that he thought the Ambassador should put these questions to the Secretary of State, but that for his part it seemed to be clear that in effect the debate on Wednesday had created a new situation, since we had ceased to close our eyes to Germany's rearmament. Mr. Eden was confident, however, that there was no intention on our part to invite Germany to take the next step. On the contrary, the Secretary of State had made it clear in his speech that this was a European question and this phrase clearly implied consultation with others, notably with France, who was deeply interested in the matter. The Ambassador said that he was glad to have Mr. Eden's explanation and that he would ask to see the Secretary of State on Monday<sup>6</sup> or Tuesday in the matter, and he again warned Mr. Eden that M. Laval would certainly wish to talk over the position with him in Geneva.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>6</sup> December 10.

**No. 253**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 1862 [C 8299/247/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 4, 1934*

Sir,

M. Corbin called this morning to give me some information on the present position of negotiations for the Eastern Pact. He said that the French Government had answered the Polish note of last September which raised objection to Poland's adhesion<sup>1</sup> in a way which is intended to meet the difficulties.<sup>2</sup> I told the Ambassador that I had yesterday had an interview with Count Raczynski (see my despatch to Warsaw No. 490<sup>3</sup> of December 3rd), in the course of which I had expressed our strong view that Poland should find a way of joining in the Eastern Pact, and the Ambassador replied that this was a most useful contribution on our part.

2. M. Corbin then came to the main purpose of his interview, which was to say that, at the meeting of M. Laval and M. Litvinov at Geneva three weeks ago, M. Litvinov had shown some impatience at the want of progress in reaching a basis for the Eastern Pact, and that there were indications that Soviet Russia might find herself tempted to enter into separate overtures with Germany. In these circumstances the Ambassador read to me a communication to the following effect: M. Laval and M. Litvinov, he said, were at one in the desire to bring about a multilateral agreement as opposed to a bilateral

<sup>1</sup> Amended in pencil on the filed copy to read: 'adherence'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 188, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 265 below, note 4.

pact, and M. Litvinov was pressing that formal assurances should be exchanged between France and Soviet Russia to embody this distinction. M. Laval, bearing in mind the support which we had given to this conception of a regional multilateral pact for Eastern Europe, was prepared to meet M. Litvinov's wishes, and we might shortly expect that a text would be signed which would take note of the reciprocal assurances between France and Soviet Russia not to lend themselves to negotiations with countries invited to participate in the pact which might lead to bilateral agreements which would prejudice its realisation. The two parties would at the same time undertake to inform one another of any approaches made to them in this regard.<sup>4</sup> The operation of the proposed document would be temporary in character, and would only cover the period of negotiations necessary for realising the collective project. The Ambassador laid stress on the point that the agreement would not be the promotion of any bilateral arrangement, but, on the contrary, would be a transitory step designed to protect the position until a multilateral arrangement could be reached.

3. M. Corbin was good enough to lend to me the text from which he had made his communication, and it is printed as an annex,<sup>5</sup> but of course must not be regarded as a note, for the communication was verbal.

4. I asked whether the proposed document should be understood as amounting to a declaration that France and Russia would not enter into a purely bilateral pact between themselves. The Ambassador seemed to think that this would really be its effect, though it seems to me that the account given of it rather indicates that each of them promises the other not to enter into a special arrangement with a third party. The reference to Germany's approaches to Soviet Russia with financial proposals, which might be followed by political relations,<sup>6</sup> surely lend[s] support to this view.

5. I thanked the Ambassador for his communication and emphasised that we retained our interest in the achievement of a multilateral Eastern Pact. If Germany became a party to it it would undoubtedly be a valuable contribution to European security. The Ambassador was unable to say whether a communication similar to that he was making to me would be made to any other capital.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>4</sup> A protocol on these lines was signed by Maxime Litvinov and Pierre Laval at Geneva on December 5, 1934. It is printed in *Miscellaneous No. 3 (1936)*, Cmd. 5143, pp. 14-15. Copies were communicated by the French delegation to the United Kingdom delegation at Geneva on December 7, and by the Soviet Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office on December 13.

<sup>5</sup> Not printed.

<sup>6</sup> The reference was to the following sentence in the text referred to in paragraph 3 above: 'M. Litvinoff a insisté pour que les assurances ainsi échangées prissent un caractère formel, son Gouvernement étant l'objet de la part du Gouvernement du Reich de propositions d'ordre financier pouvant être suivies de développements d'ordre politique.'

No. 254

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 7)*

*No. 599 [C 8325/247/18]*

MOSCOW, December 4, 1934

Sir,

With reference to my telegram No. 160<sup>1</sup> of the 27th [28th] November, I have the honour to report that conversations which I have subsequently had with the Italian Ambassador and one or two other colleagues tend to confirm me in the view which I expressed that the Soviet Government is not thinking of any separate negotiations with Germany, and that as yet there has been no change at all in Soviet-German relations. It is said that the new German Ambassador's<sup>2</sup> instructions on taking up his post were to be as inactive as possible.

2. Meanwhile, the Soviet Government are undoubtedly anxious that M. Laval should not falter in carrying on the pro-Soviet policy of the late M. Barthou, and that a pact anyhow between France and the Soviet Union should be concluded before possibly some *détente* may arise in Franco-German relations. In this connexion it would seem that M. Litvinov has a strong card to play owing to the fact that there was practically a bargain struck between him and M. Barthou that the entry of the Soviet Union into the League of Nations would actively facilitate the execution of the plan for the Eastern pacts.

3. M. Litvinov, as I understand, arrived in Moscow three days ago, but this arrival was not announced, and he did not go to his office, nor did he show himself anywhere, and I understand that he has again left for Geneva. Doubtless he came here to report to the higher authorities.

4. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin.

I have, &c.,  
CHILSTON

<sup>1</sup> No. 228.

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Werner Count von der Schulenberg presented his credentials as German Ambassador to the Soviet Union on October 3, 1934; cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 229.

No. 255

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 5, 4.50 a.m.)*

*No. 108 L.N. Telegraphic [C 8214/74/18]*

*Important*

GENEVA, December 5, 1934, 1.50 a.m.

Following from Mr. Eden:—

Monsieur Laval asked to see me this evening<sup>1</sup> and we spoke first of the position of the Saar. He said that the agreement in Rome<sup>2</sup> had dealt with

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was evidently drafted on December 4.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 250, note 1.

most technical questions including payment for mines, etc., but that there was no reference in the report of the Committee of Three to maintenance of order in the Saar.<sup>3</sup> He had already told Mr. Campbell that the French Government would at the Council to-morrow make their position clear. They had no desire whatever to enter the Saar and would themselves much prefer that others should undertake the task. Monsieur Laval had said this in the Chamber<sup>4</sup> and had been loudly applauded. If, however, this course were not possible then clearly the French Government could not deny their responsibility towards their own people of whom there was a number in the Saar. They would therefore ask the Council to authorize action by French Gardes-Mobiles at the request of the Governing Commission should emergency arise. They would also ask at the Council tomorrow other Powers concerned, particularly the United Kingdom and Italy, to join in such action. Monsieur Laval very earnestly hoped that we should see our way to do so. If we could not, he had no doubt we would at least endorse resolution authorising action by the French and authorising also other States who might be willing to take their share of the responsibility to do so jointly with them. I told Monsieur Laval that I would report what he had said to London and give him definite statement of our position in the morning. I had thought it possible that report of the Committee of Three might deal with the question of the maintenance of order in the Saar. Now that it was clear that it did not, His Majesty's Government would consider the position in the light of the views he had just expressed.

Repeated to Paris.

<sup>3</sup> Telegram No. 107 L.N., telephoned from Geneva at 6.45 p.m. on December 4, summarized the first part of the Saar draft report, i.e. sections A to F, and reported that the full report, printed in *L.N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1694 ff., was to be circulated on the morning of December 5 and considered by the League of Nations Council in the afternoon.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 251, paragraph 3.

## No. 256

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 5, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 111 L.N. Telegraphic [C 8215/74/18]*

GENEVA, December 5, 1934, 1.50 a.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

Baron Aloisi asked to see me this evening<sup>1</sup> and after referring to report of Committee of Three expressed his regret that Monsieur Laval insisted on raising at this stage possible use in an emergency of French troops in the Saar. The French Government had approached the Italian Government as to possibility of the latter's cooperating with French in the Saar in an emergency. On Signor Mussolini's instructions Baron Aloisi had told Monsieur Laval that as at present advised Italian Government were not prepared to

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was evidently drafted on December 4.

do this but Signor Mussolini had added that he would wish to reconsider the position if His Majesty's Government were to express their intention to send any troops into the Saar.

Baron Aloisi did not seem to appreciate the distinction between an international force without French troops as a prevention and its association with French troops as a cure after emergency had arisen. I thought it best however not to point this out to him at this stage.

## No. 257

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 5, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 112 L.N. Telegraphic [C 8216/74/18]*

*Immediate Confidential*

GENEVA, December 5, 1934, 1.50 a.m.

Following from Mr. Eden:

My immediately preceding telegrams.<sup>1</sup>

Agreement in Rome has brought a certain appeasement in the Saar situation. It is doubtful however how lasting this will prove and fundamentals of the situation appear unchanged. In any event Monsieur Laval proposes to raise the problem of maintenance of order in the Saar at a secret meeting of the Council which it is expected will follow the public discussion and approval of report of committee of three either tomorrow<sup>2</sup> or Thursday.<sup>3</sup>

His Majesty's Government appear to have the choice of four courses.

1. We can approve the use of French troops in the Saar if called upon by Governing Commission in an emergency. We can state that we will ourselves send a contingent to assist.

2. We can authorise the use of French troops in such emergency and refuse ourselves to send a contingent.

3. We can decline either to send a contingent ourselves or to authorise the French Government to do so.

4. We can follow the procedure set out in conclusions reached at meeting of Ministers on December 3rd (C.P. 285).<sup>4</sup>

If we adopt either 1 or 2 we shall be authorising the use of French troops in the Saar even in interim period following the plebiscite when the Saar may have voted for Germany. If we adopt 3 we shall be depriving Mr. Knox of one factor which has enabled him to hold the situation up to date. I am therefore still of opinion that 4 is the correct course to follow.

<sup>1</sup> See Nos. 248, 249, 255, and 256.

<sup>3</sup> December 6.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. December 5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 251, paragraph 4 and note 7.

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 226 Telegraphic [C 8214/74/18]*

*Most Immediate and Secret* FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 5, 1934, 2.50 p.m.*

1. Mr. Eden reports from Geneva<sup>1</sup> that this afternoon M. Laval is expected to make some statement in private session of the Council about the French attitude to providing in case of emergency some kind of force to preserve or restore order in the Saar. It is believed that M. Laval will take up the position that France would much prefer that others should undertake the task. He is certain to insist that if an international force drawn from other sources is impossible, any French aid should be given only upon the authority of the Council and to press that the United Kingdom and Italy, for example, should in case of need, join in such action.

2. We fully appreciate the objection to any French contribution and have been considering what our answer would be if the Council ask for any [?an] international force, to make sure that good order is kept during the plebiscite, which is composed of contingents from several countries, excluding both France and Germany. But before we analyse this possibility further, we should like to know whether the German Government would be prepared to express their approval of such an arrangement.

3. You should make immediate enquiries to ascertain very confidentially the German reaction. As the German Government know, we have repeatedly insisted that we are determined to do what we can to secure that the plebiscite is carried through quietly and in due order. While we do not see any reason to anticipate disturbance if calming influences are exercised in all quarters, at the same time, prevention is better than cure. There is therefore a good deal to be said for the purely temporary presence of an international force inside the Saar before the plebiscite takes place and for the short time afterwards until the decision is carried through. But for this purpose it is essential:

(1) that the force should be international and not limited to a single Power;

(2) that neither France nor Germany should contribute, since both are interested parties.

For your own information only, we also feel that both France and Germany should consent to such an arrangement, but of course you will not offer Germany a free veto.

4. You should most strongly insist that this enquiry is both secret and provisional. The proper course to take if Germany raised objection remains to be considered. But we make this enquiry most urgently now and ask for a confidential reply because we wish to do everything possible as a member of the Council to secure that all passes off smoothly.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Nos. 255 and 257.

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 385 Telegraphic [C 8214/74/18]*

*Most Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 5, 1934, 5.30 p.m.*

Please see Signor Mussolini at the earliest possible moment and make to him a communication from me to the following effect.

1. We understand that M. Laval this afternoon is expected to make a statement to the Council about the French attitude to providing in case of emergency some kind of force to preserve or restore order in the Saar. M. Laval will say that France would much prefer that others should undertake the task. He is certain to insist that if an international force drawn from other sources is impossible, any French aid should be given only under the authority of the Council and to press that the United Kingdom and Italy, for example, should in case of need, join in such action.

2. We ourselves fully appreciate the objection to any French contribution. Moreover, we are impressed with the view that it is a mistake to wait for trouble to arise and then, if it arises, to take steps to suppress it. Prevention is better than cure, and an international force organised at the request of the Council should secure without difficulty the peaceful carrying through of the plebiscite and its consequences. If the Council in its collective capacity decided that this was the proper course, and asked for contingents, we could not possibly be the only contributor. Sooner than that we should have to join in authorising possible action in case of emergency by the French. But we are convinced that this is a bad method. We hope, therefore, that if the Council makes the recommendation above indicated with a view to putting an international force in the Saar before the plebiscite and keeping it there for a short time until the consequences of the plebiscite are carried through, other important members of the League would also be prepared to contribute. Chief among these and absolutely essential would be Italy. We feel that if the United Kingdom and Italy both made a contribution with smaller contingents from Holland and Switzerland and if possible Belgium this would give the force a fully international character. The object, of course, would be to devise an arrangement to which both France and Germany would assent but to which neither France nor Germany would contribute any force.

3. We should esteem it of the greatest value to have Signor Mussolini's response immediately. As I have said, co-operation with Italy is in our view absolutely essential and we believe that this co-operation will be no less congenial to Signor Mussolini than to ourselves.



No. 260

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 5, 7.15 p.m.)*  
*No. 311 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8238/74/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, December 5, 1934

Your telegram No. 226.<sup>1</sup>

Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs agree that small international force as suggested in the above would be very helpful in the Saar both before plebiscite and afterwards until decision is carried through.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 258.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram was repeated by the Foreign Office, at 7.30 p.m. on December 5, to Paris (No. 166), Rome (No. 386), and Geneva (No. 120 L.N.).

No. 261

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 6, 11.20 a.m.)*  
*No. 115 L.N. Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8278/74/18]*

GENEVA, December 6, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

I had a conversation with Baron Aloisi this morning on the subject of the size of international force.<sup>1</sup>

Figure suggested by Mr. Knox and agreed by Baron Aloisi is 3000-4000. Former figure would probably suffice.

I should be grateful for immediate instructions as to size of our contingent.

I reminded Baron Aloisi of our condition that other countries should participate. Our suggestion is that at least one and if possible two neutral countries should send contingents.

Holland and Sweden have been spoken of here.

<sup>1</sup> At the first meeting of the 83rd (Extraordinary) Session of the League of Nations Council on December 5, M. Laval had asked the Council to decide that the duty of maintaining order in the Saar Territory during the preparations for and the taking of the plebiscite should be entrusted to international contingents. He said that 'France would willingly agree not to send a contingent, on the understanding, of course, that Germany also would send none . . .'. Mr. Eden then announced that His Majesty's Government would be 'prepared to supply a suitable proportion of such an international force'. See *L.N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1705-8. After the Council meeting on December 5, Baron Aloisi asked for the German Government's views about the policing of the Saar; cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 375, which also states that the 'sudden initiative by the British in the secret session which had preceded the public session had taken the Italians by surprise and had displeased them'.

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 6, 1 p.m.)*  
*No. 385 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8296/74/18]*

ROME, December 6, 1934

My telegram No. 383.<sup>1</sup>

Signor Mussolini whom I saw this morning told me that provided the Council proposed and the French and German Governments accepted the constitution of an international force to keep order in the Saar before and during the plebiscite he would be ready to send a contingent if we did the same. I was able to inform him of the substance of Berlin telegram No. 311<sup>2</sup> which gave him much satisfaction. He told me that at first he had been opposed to any such plan as when Italian forces had been sent to Upper Silesia to keep order they had lost some men.<sup>3</sup> He wished to act *pari passu* with us.

He stated that he intended to send a force of carabinieri carefully selected with German speaking officers and would be ready to provide any number wished for by the Committee of Three. He mentioned figures up to 1,000 men.

I remarked that we might not be able to send police and that the carabinieri and our police were hardly on the same footing. He replied that it would not make any difference whether we sent regular soldiers or police. But he observed that he thought it would be a grave mistake to allow Russian, Czechoslovak and even Belgian participation in such an international force. Red police or soldiers would inevitably be regarded as propagandists while Czechoslovak and Belgian contingents would be disliked in Germany. He agreed to Dutch and Swiss forces and if a fifth country had to be chosen he hoped that it would be Scandinavian.

He was highly appreciative of message contained in your telegram No. 387<sup>4</sup> and promised to convey to Baron Aloisi His Majesty's Government's thanks.

He showed himself distinctly happy at decision of His Majesty's Government to participate so fully in this question which had contained a menace to European peace.

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram, telephoned to the Foreign Office at 11.30 a.m. on December 6, Sir E. Drummond mentioned press reports of the Italian Government's readiness to contribute a quota to an international force for the Saar, and said that he would be seeing Signor Mussolini that morning.

<sup>2</sup> No. 260.

<sup>3</sup> For documents relating to the Upper Silesia plebiscite held on March 20, 1921, see First Series, Volume XI, Chapter I and Volume XVI, Part I.

<sup>4</sup> In this telegram telephoned to Rome at 11.30 a.m. on December 6, Sir E. Drummond was instructed to convey immediately to Signor Mussolini His Majesty's Government's satisfaction with the Saar agreement and Baron Aloisi's handling of the negotiations.

No. 263

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 6, 5 p.m.)*

*No. 133 Telegraphic [C 8301/74/18]*

PARIS, December 6, 1934, 3.40 p.m.

Monsieur Léger expressed himself this morning in enthusiastic terms in regard to decision of His Majesty's Government in the matter of policing of the Saar.<sup>1</sup>

He thought nothing could do more to fortify the League, to calm the atmosphere in Europe and generally, to encourage Italy, by associating her with Great Britain in so important an operation, to collaborate more freely in the general work of pacification.<sup>2</sup>

Repeated to Geneva, Berlin and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 261, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Paris telegram No. 132 of even date, reporting on French press reactions, said that there was 'no trace of any feeling but thankfulness at lifting of all responsibility from French shoulders'.

No. 264

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 7, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 116 L.N. Telegraphic [C 8535/74/18]*

*Immediate. Personal*

GENEVA, December 6, 1934, 11.15 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden for the Secretary of State.

Your telegram No. 27 to Berne.<sup>1</sup>

Council at its meeting yesterday took note of declarations which had been made and requested Committee of Three to consider problems thus raised and present to Council before close of present session concrete proposals on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

In the circumstances you will appreciate that responsibility has been placed by Council in the first instance upon Baron Aloisi and his colleagues and that therefore normal procedure would seem to be for them to approach countries to invite their participation in international force. Baron Aloisi tells me that a circular letter has already been sent to members of the League with a report of yesterday's meeting. I am a little apprehensive lest, if we show ourselves too active in enlisting participation from other Powers, we may give offence in a quarter which we know to be susceptible. It might perhaps therefore be more convenient if negotiations as regards composition and organisation of force could in the main be handled from here, more especially since General Temperley arrives tomorrow.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not printed: cf. No. 271 below.

<sup>2</sup> See *L/N.O.J.*, December 1934, p. 1708.

<sup>3</sup> In telegram No. 114 L.N. from Geneva, received by telephone at 10.15 p.m. on December 6, Mr. Eden requested that Lord Hailsham should be asked to agree that Major-General

A. C. Temperley (Head of the War Office section of the British delegation to the Disarmament Conference and British military representative at the League of Nations) should leave for Geneva immediately as a number of technical military matters were being raised with which he considered himself not competent to deal.

### No. 265

*Sir J. Simon to Sir W. Erskine<sup>1</sup> (Warsaw)*

*No. 11 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8298/247/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 6, 1934

Polish Ambassador<sup>2</sup> had a conversation with me on December 3rd. He wished to know our views of the consequences which might follow the House of Commons Debate of last week.<sup>3</sup> I pointed out that the statement we had made as to German re-armament had been communicated to the German government as well as to Paris, Rome and the United States. We had not asked for a reply, but we assumed that this might be the beginning of new communications between the Powers. If it led at least part of the way to agreement we should of course be very glad and any help Poland could give in the matter would be appreciated. I reminded the Ambassador that besides the question of German equality the question of security remained to be settled and in this connexion we regarded the proposed Eastern Pact as important. We held the view strongly that Poland should find a way of joining in the Eastern Pact and any influence she could exercise towards inducing Germany to do the same would be regarded as a real contribution to European appeasement. Despatch<sup>4</sup> by bag later.

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Ambassador at Warsaw.

<sup>2</sup> Count Raczyński had presented his letters of credence as Polish Ambassador at London, in succession to M. Skirmunt, on November 6.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to the debate on November 28; see 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 857-982.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed: the text of this despatch, No. 490 of December 3, was identical with that of telegram No. 11 Saving above, except for the first sentence which, in the despatch, read: 'The Polish Ambassador, Count Raczyński, had a conversation with me today.'

### No. 266

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 7)*

*No. 258 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8300/20/18]*

BERLIN, December 6, 1934

Baron von Neurath expressed to me last night his satisfaction at the work done in Rome by Baron Aloisi's Saar Committee. I agreed, and said that it was to be hoped that future conversations regarding the limitation of armaments would produce an equally happy result. His Excellency thought they might, but only after a solution of the Saar question. In certain quarters, he added, too much haste was being shown in the matter.

Baron von Neurath doubtless had in mind the feverish and futile activities of that ambulant and compromising windbag, Herr von Ribbentrop, whose sole achievement in Paris<sup>1</sup> seems to have been to make the French reactionary press even more suspicious than usual. His Excellency often deplores to me the peregrinations of Herr von Ribbentrop, but so long as the latter remains the familiar spirit of his master he is powerless to prevent them.

The 'Times' correspondent tells me that he heard yesterday from General von Reichenau that the German Government would probably before long express their readiness to reopen, after the Saar, discussions about rearmament. General von Reichenau remarked that the Germans would merely state their requirements without revealing how far they had already fulfilled them. Would it not be absurd, he said, to preface an invitation to the French to sign a Convention by an admission of Germany's violation of the Treaty of Versailles? Indeed would not such an admission place the French Government in an impossible position?

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 244.

## No. 267

### *Memorandum by Mr. Rawlins regarding the working of the Anglo-German Payments Agreement in November<sup>1</sup>*

[C 8364/90/18]

BERLIN, December 6, 1934

The Anglo-German Payments Agreement which was signed and came into force on the 1st November,<sup>2</sup> introduced entirely new principles with regard to German foreign trade. Up to that date goods imported into Germany from other countries were paid for under Clearing or Exchange Agreements providing that persons formerly in possession of a general *devisen* permit might obtain similar permits up to a fixed percentage of previous imports. Goods might also be imported by direct barter approved by the *Devisen* Control Offices. It seems essential to emphasise the point that, however unrestricted imports into Germany might have been nominally, there existed in practice a direct prohibition to pay for any kind of import unless the *Devisen* Offices and Control Offices considered such import justified from the economic and often from the political point of view. The official reason for this state of affairs was that it was necessary to ensure an export surplus by limiting imports, as experience had shown that the German authorities were unable to achieve such a surplus by schemes for assisting exports. The Control Offices entrenched behind the barbed wire of voluminous regulations,

<sup>1</sup> A copy of this memorandum by the Commercial Counsellor of H.M. Embassy at Berlin was forwarded to the Foreign Office by Mr. T. St. Quintin Hill of the Board of Trade on December 7.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 154, note 2.

which were often unintelligible to the overworked officials, either refused many applications or postponed the decision as long as possible.

The provision of Article 1 of the Anglo-German Payments Agreement to the effect that foreign exchange certificates should be issued 'without restriction in respect of the import into Germany of all descriptions' was such a far-reaching departure from former regulations that it appeared to be regarded as fantastic if not impossible by the administrative officials. The circular order issued by the Central Foreign Exchange Office to Control Offices of the 5th November, 1934, regarding trade with the United Kingdom stated that applications for foreign exchange certificates could be granted on a scale in respect of which 'special instructions' would be issued. German firms with applications outstanding or who tentatively submitted new applications met with confusion in the Control Offices, which were apparently waiting for definite principles upon which to carry out their functions in connection with U.K. imports. In some cases, permits were granted up to the level of last year's trade in November, in others applications were definitely refused.

After allowing a few days for the lack of organisation in the Control Offices and for their being unacquainted at first with the new procedure under the Anglo-German Payments Agreement, representations were made to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Herr Ulrich), who gave an assurance that the provisions of Article 1 must be implemented. All enquirers here were requested by the Commercial Secretariat to notify refusals or undue delays in obtaining a ruling and a certain number of cases were reported. Further representations were made to the Ministry for Economic Affairs (Dr. Bergemann) and it was arranged that such cases (about a dozen in all) should be sent on to the Ministry and would receive immediate attention. The Ministry took up each case with the respective Control Office; in several instances applications previously refused were approved. On different occasions Dr. Bergemann informed me that Control Offices, particularly the Wool Control Office, had been seriously reprimanded for the unsatisfactory manner in which applications for devisen permits in respect of U.K. imports were being dealt with.

It was clear, however, towards the end of the month that Control Offices were still not granting permits without restriction. On the 30th November, I called once more on Dr. Bergemann and I pressed on him in an unmistakable manner that a radical improvement must take place at once if the Agreement were to have a chance of continuing. He immediately got into touch with Dr. Schacht, the Minister for Economic Affairs, and informed me the following morning that the latter had personally given strict orders to Control Offices that they must issue devisen permits without restriction for all United Kingdom goods. This information has also been communicated to H.M. Consuls, who have been asked to report any case of local importers failing to obtain a devisen permit.

It must always be remembered, as mentioned above, that the Germans start from the definitely negative side of trade possibilities. Their interpreta-

tion of 'without restriction' must be appreciated to understand some of the questions which are not likely to be answered even by the energetic measures promised by Dr. Schacht himself. The Germans contend that 'without restriction' can in this country only mean 'within existing German regulations with regard to devisen, monopolies, import prohibitions, buying permits'. The following two questions, therefore, arose at an early stage and only the first has as yet been solved:—

1. Should United Kingdom imports be allowed beyond the average of those during the corresponding period of 1932 and 1933?
2. Should devisen permits be issued to persons who were formerly not in possession of a general devisen permit and who would not be entitled to such permit under the German regulations? Two special classes of applicants have come forward with this question, viz.
  - (a) agents newly appointed;
  - (b) persons supplying a large number of small firms (pens, gloves, suit lengths) who previously paid within the free limit.<sup>3</sup>

It is understood that the standpoint of the Germans was acceded to during the negotiations with respect to goods subject to an import licence. Buying permits are required for most raw materials and semi-manufactured goods; as Germany is urgently in need of these, the buying permit ought not to interfere much with the import of these products, which on the other hand are likely to be given preference over finished goods. Any extension of the buying permit procedure might serve as a dangerous weapon for the diversion of trade from finished goods to raw materials.

As against the above unsatisfactory aspects of the Anglo-German Payments Agreement and its application must be set off the reports from numerous firms, particularly concerning herrings, that trade has been considerably facilitated. Some of the persons with complaints admit that their imports (cloth, china clay) in November were as high as or higher than in the corresponding period of the past two years. Firms with 'Special foreigner's accounts for payments within Germany' have stated that they prefer to work under the Anglo-German Payments Agreement, which gives them additional import facilities.

The German authorities, especially Dr. Bergemann and the Reichsbank, have shown every willingness to be helpful in eliminating difficulties, including those of a purely technical nature which could not be foreseen in framing the Agreement. For example, the complicated mechanism for effecting sales of United Kingdom wool and cotton yarns, depending upon rapid market fluctuations, is naturally dislocated somewhat by the need for buying and devisen permits. A little good will on the part of the Control Office should obviate the necessity for further official intervention to the Ministry for Economic Affairs, but complaints will be submitted as soon as they come to

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Ashton-Gwatkin, a Counsellor in the Foreign Office, commented that this section of the memorandum 'cleared up our doubts regarding "without restriction"'. Mr. Beckett, Second Legal Adviser, minuted that 'it seems to me only to put the question without answering it'.

notice. Suggestions to facilitate the use of the Chamber of Commerce Certificates, Article 1 (iv)<sup>4</sup> have already been submitted.

There is no doubt that a great improvement should take place in the functioning of the Agreement in December. Control Offices can no longer plead ignorance of the new conditions imposed concerning United Kingdom trade, and United Kingdom exporters and German importers are cognisant of the requirements of the Agreement. The exceptional cases awaiting settlement can be more carefully considered now that an understanding has, it is hoped, been arrived at regarding the bulk of United Kingdom imports into Germany.

<sup>4</sup> Of the Anglo-German Payments Agreement.

### No. 268

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 7, 10.15 a.m.)*  
*No. 118 L.N. Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8312/74/18]*

*Immediate*

GENEVA, December 7, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

Your telegram 41 to Stockholm, 38 to Hague and 27 to Berne.<sup>1</sup>

I have informed Baron Aloisi of the action which has been taken for which he thanked me.

He said he would be grateful if Governments approached could now be asked by you to communicate their decision to Secretary General in the form of a reply to the circular procès verbal which has already been sent to them on the subject.

He feels difficulty in selecting himself the Government[?] who should be approached.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 271 below, notes 2-4.

### No. 269

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 7, 10.15 a.m.)*  
*No. 119 L.N. Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8313/74/18]*

GENEVA, December 7, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

M. Laval told me at lunch yesterday that he had asked his Government to bear cost of transport across French territory of contingents for the Saar. Last night M. Laval sent me a message through Mr. Knox to say that French Government had agreed to do this.

Here is some indication of extent of French relief from anxiety!



No. 270

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 7, 1 p.m.)*  
*No. 120 L.N. Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8336/74/18]*

*Immediate*

GENEVA, December 7, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

Command of international force in the Saar.

I have been thinking over this matter and would suggest that most effective method of dealing with this matter might be a personal appeal from you to Signor Mussolini through Sir E. Drummond. There are two strong reasons for the command being entrusted to a British officer which must surely appeal to Signor Mussolini.

(1) Mr. Knox is himself a Britisher and liaison with a commanding officer of his own nationality would clearly assist smooth working.

(2) Suggestion for international force was a British initiative. I have been trying to think of some concession we could offer the Italian in exchange. When the Council has endorsed, I hope tomorrow, the despatch of an international force I anticipate that a committee will at once be set up composed of representatives of those Powers who are providing contingents. We might perhaps suggest that chairmanship of this committee should be offered to an Italian, since we ourselves would in any event be represented upon it.

If you think there is anything in these ideas it would help us here if Signor Mussolini could be approached at once before I have to raise the matter of the command with Baron Aloisi.

No. 271

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*  
*No. 393 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8296/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 7, 1934, 4 p.m.

My telegram No. 392.<sup>1</sup>

After recapitulating the proceedings at the Council on December 5th about the Saar international force, my telegrams to His Majesty's Representatives at Hague,<sup>2</sup> Stockholm<sup>3</sup> and Berne<sup>4</sup> explained that in addition to British and Italian participation in the force it was necessary that contingents should be forthcoming as well from other countries conveniently placed who were also members of the League. This was necessary in order that the body might be truly international.

His Majesty's Representatives were therefore to express hope to Governments to which they were accredited that, if approached by Council, they

<sup>1</sup> No. 273 below: these two telegrams were telephoned in reverse order.

<sup>2</sup> No. 38 of December 6, not printed.

<sup>3</sup> No. 41 of December 6, not printed.

<sup>4</sup> No. 27 of December 6, not printed.

would contribute small contingents. In case of Switzerland view was expressed that offer of a small body of armed and disciplined police would have a heartening effect.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In Berne telegram No. 15 of December 7 (received at 6.30 p.m.) Sir H. Kennard, H.M. Minister, reported that the Swiss Federal Government 'while entirely approving proposal and congratulating His Majesty's Government on initiative they have taken in the matter are unable to furnish Swiss contingent for . . . purely technical reasons'.

## No. 272

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 7, 4.15 p.m.)*  
*No. 121 L.N. Telegraphic [C 8349/74/18]*

GENEVA, December 7, 1934, 4.6 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden:—

General Temperley<sup>1</sup> spoke to Mr. Knox this morning about strength of international force. Mr. Knox explained that his former estimate of 2,000 was made at a time when he could if necessary still call on French troops.

Figure now mentioned is in the neighbourhood of 3,000. I presume His Majesty's Government will want to supply about 50% of this number.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 264, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> In the telephoned reply (telegram No. 135 L.N. of 10.15 a.m. on December 8) Mr. Eden was informed that His Majesty's Government would have 'no objection to a total figure in the neighbourhood of 3,000' and 'would be willing to supply about 50% of this number'.

## No. 273

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*  
*No. 392 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8296/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 7, 1934, 4.15 p.m.

Your telegram No. 385<sup>1</sup> of December 6th.

1. Please see Signor Mussolini at once and thank him for his prompt response to our request. His Majesty's Government are much gratified that Italy is willing to co-operate in response to our proposal. Signor Mussolini's intention to send a force of Carabinieri appears to us most appropriate. Our police, as you rightly pointed out, are not on the same footing, for they are not armed, and for the most part they are locally organised. We shall therefore contribute a military contingent of regular troops with a Commander of suitable rank. We entirely agree with Signor Mussolini's view about Russian or Czechoslovak participation and do not think it likely that the Belgians would be willing to participate in any case.

<sup>1</sup> No. 262.

2. We consider that it is important that agreement should be at once reached between the Powers who are known to be contributing the principal contingents as to the nationality of the Commander-in-Chief. Neither this question, nor the strictly military questions about appropriate zones and the like, can be settled by leaving everything to the Council, or even to a committee of the Council, while on the other hand, if an understanding between Signor Mussolini and ourselves is immediately arrived at, there should be no difficulty in getting concurrence at Geneva.

3. We hope that Italy will agree that in the circumstances mentioned in paragraph 1 the Commander-in-Chief should be British. Apart from the fact that the main proposal emanated from us and that our contribution will take the form of regular troops, there is the further point that in all the previous cases where an international force has been provided for a plebiscite the nationality of the Commander-in-Chief has been the same as the nationality of the President of the Commission. For purposes of prompt and efficient organisation this is really essential.

4. I am, however, most desirous of making [? marking] in some way the importance of Italian co-operation at this important stage. If I could learn from Signor Mussolini to-day that he agreed with my proposal in paragraph 3, I should be disposed to communicate with Mr. Eden at Geneva and urge that Baron Aloisi should be the Chairman of a new committee which I understand will be formed by the Council to-morrow morning for the purpose of assisting the Council. Baron Aloisi has already been informed of action taken by me here urging that small contingents should be supplied by Holland, Sweden and Switzerland. My telegrams about this<sup>2</sup> are being repeated to you. We have made these communications to save time and because we may be able to exercise a little useful influence. But, of course, the regular invitation would proceed from the Council and their replies would be addressed to Geneva.

Repeated to Geneva, No. 130 (by telephone).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 271, notes 2-4.

## No. 274

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*

*No. 131 L.N. Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8336/74/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 7, 1934, 5 p.m.*

Following for Mr. Eden:—

Your telegram No. 120.<sup>1</sup>

1. There is a third reason why the command should be in British hands. Italy is proposing to send armed police and not soldiers of the line. Our police are unarmed and for the most part locally organised and so we must necessarily send first class military troops.

<sup>1</sup> No. 270.

2. My telegram to Signor Mussolini asking him to agree forthwith that the Commander-in-Chief should be British<sup>2</sup> is being repeated to you. I am very glad that it has now been realised that the conclusion of Wednesday's<sup>3</sup> Council Meeting was not satisfactory, and that it was a mistake to hand over what remained to be done to the Committee of Three. The agreed choice of a Commander-in-Chief scarcely appears a matter on which agreement can conveniently or properly be reached merely by discussion in the Council or its Committee. It is a practical question between the States which actually contribute the main contingents, just as the location of troops or the division of the area into zones cannot possibly be decided by Council deliberation. I quite approve the idea that a new committee should be formed, but the practical way to deal with these practical points is to get the agreement first and to let the Committee and the Council register it as their approved decision afterwards. It is very important to get this point clear in our own heads while of course reserving all the credit and all the responsibility for the Council as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 273.

<sup>3</sup> December 5; cf. No. 264.

### No. 275

*Mr. Vereker<sup>1</sup> (Stockholm) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 8, 9.30 a.m.)  
No. 24 Telegraphic [C 8368/74/18]*

STOCKHOLM, December 7, 1934, 5.15 p.m.

Your telegram No. 42.<sup>2</sup>

On the receipt of your telegram No. 41<sup>3</sup> I saw Acting Secretary General at Ministry of Foreign Affairs and . . .<sup>4</sup> verbal communication on lines suggested. I confirmed this later by means of formal note adding information contained in your telegram No. 42.

Herr Sandler<sup>5</sup> who was immediately informed of my communication requests me to inform you that Swedish Government are giving the matter their serious attention but before any decision can be reached they must await expected communication from League of Nations which must be discussed first of all by Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs which meets on December 10th. He had promised to keep me informed of developments.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> First Secretary in H.M. Legation at Stockholm.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed. It recorded that instructions similar to those in telegram No. 41 to Stockholm (see No. 271, note 3) had been despatched to Berne.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. note 2 above.

<sup>4</sup> The text is here uncertain.

<sup>5</sup> Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>6</sup> Stockholm telegram No. 26 of December 10 reported that the Swedish Government had accepted the Council's invitation to contribute a contingent to the international force.

No. 276

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 7, 7.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 387 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8347/74/18]*

ROME, December 7, 1934

Your telegram No. 392.<sup>1</sup>

Signor Mussolini was clearly pleased that His Majesty's Government shares his views with regard to non-participation of Russia and Czechoslovakia in international force and at action taken concerning invitations to Holland, Switzerland and Sweden.

He agrees that Commander-in-Chief of force shall be of British nationality and would be glad if His Majesty's Government's representative would propose or support Baron Aloisi for the Presidency of new Committee. This Committee will, I understand, be additional to that of existing Committee of Three and be composed mainly of representatives of countries sending contingents.

He told me that he had despatched senior military officer to Geneva to take [? make] contact and begin planning necessary arrangements.

Repeated to Geneva by Foreign Office No. 133.

<sup>1</sup> No. 273.

No. 277

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Patteson (Geneva)*  
*No. 134 L.N. Telegraphic [C 8535/74/18]*

*Personal*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 7, 1934, 11 p.m.

Following for Mr. Eden.

Your personal telegram No. 116.<sup>1</sup>

I fully appreciate point made in paragraph 2. We had no desire to force the pace; but in fact your telegram No. 116 and Mr. Perowne's conversation with Mr. Makins<sup>2</sup> this morning showed that up to then no action as regards invitations had been taken. In these circumstances I think that our indications to our representatives at The Hague, Stockholm and Berne were useful.

It appears from your telegram No. 118<sup>3</sup> that Baron Aloisi was grateful for our action as the Committee of Three had found difficulty in selecting the governments to be approached.

<sup>1</sup> No. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. R. M. Makins was a member of the League of Nations and Western Department of the Foreign Office: no record of this conversation has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>3</sup> No. 268.

No. 278

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 8)*

*No. 335 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8346/74/18]*

PARIS, December 7, 1934

My telegram No. 132.<sup>1</sup>

French press continues to express the greatest satisfaction over the decision to send an international force to the Saar. Even those quarters usually sceptical about the League declare that it has now justified its existence. Rarely has there been such unanimity of approval. The press gives unstinted praise to His Majesty's Government for their initiative. British prestige here has risen greatly in popular estimation.

2. The decision has also reacted strongly in favour of Monsieur Laval who is held to have achieved a great personal triumph, his 'wise and supple policy' being favourably contrasted with Monsieur Barthou's 'categorical diplomacy'. His stock is now much higher in the press than that of Monsieur Flandin.

3. Monsieur Daladier writing in 'L'Oeuvre' speaks of the removal of a nightmare which has hung over business and politics in France for the past six months. He hopes that the methods of co-operation between Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany now being applied may prove equally successful when the discussion of disarmament is resumed.

4. Monsieur Léon Bailby in 'Le Jour' uses the same language about the lifting of a nightmare.

5. Whilst applauding the decision, some papers (of the Right) express anxiety lest it was taken as part of a bargain involving as the price an early resumption of negotiations for legalising German re-armament.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 263, note 2.

No. 279

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 8, 11 a.m.)*

*No. 261 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8374/74/18]*

BERLIN, December 7, 1934

Following official communiqué appeared in the press today:

'The Plenipotentiary for the Saar of the Chancellor of the Reich, Bürckel, has issued the following order: To all S.A. and S.S. men in the Reich! Communists and emigrés have been trying, by alleging that "fairly large troops" of S.A. and S.S. men were entering the Saar Territory, to convince public opinion once again of German plans for a Putsch.

In order that this report may be shown in its proper light from the start, the following order has been issued: All S.A. and S.S. men are most strictly forbidden to enter the Saar Territory for any reason whatever,

unless they are entitled to vote at the plebiscite. The latter must of course observe the prescribed limits for the period of their entry.

Any person who, in spite of this order, attempts to enter the Saar Territory, will be at once called to account by the competent Party authority.'

Baron von Neurath, when he informed me on the 5th instant of the agreement of the German Government to the sending of an international, neutral force to the Saar,<sup>1</sup> remarked that such a force would presumably be able to prevent any acts by Communists, etc., calculated to cause disturbances. His Excellency has more than once in the past expressed to me his conviction that it was only from the Communists that any trouble was to be expected.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 260.

### No. 280

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 8, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 263 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8381/74/18]*

*Confidential*

BERLIN, December 7, 1934

According to a high official the Chancellor now takes a rosy view of his prospects. The more he reviews recent debate in the House of Commons<sup>1</sup> and his consent to an international contingent for the Saar<sup>2</sup> the more pleased he becomes.

Though he dislikes presence of fresh troops on German soil particularly an Italian contingent he realises that the Saar is as good as free if England participates. He will, he thinks, obtain an extra 10% of Saar votes calculating that French abstention will frighten many rats into leaving the ship. What is more important the increased poll will greatly enhance his prestige throughout Germany and confound the wise-acres who foreboded ill for the Saar when he took office.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 265, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 260. See also *L/N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1729-30, for the German Government's letter of December 6 to the Council of the League of Nations agreeing 'to the sending of an adequate number of neutral international contingents to the Saar Territory'.

### No. 281

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 8, 11 a.m.)*  
*No. 264 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8382/20/18]*

BERLIN, December 7, 1934

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

As regards re-armament Chancellor thinks debate in the House of Commons gives Germany a title good enough for all practical purposes to effectives and weapons which he demanded last spring. As regards aeroplanes he

<sup>1</sup> No. 280.

is disposed to use the figure of 1,000 as a spring board from which to demand a further 1,000 on the ground that Germany, owing to advances made in aeroplane construction is now vulnerable from all quarters including Russia.

Chancellor is, it seems, profoundly shocked at mass executions in Russia.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> It was announced from Moscow on December 5 that 66 persons had been executed during the previous week for 'counter-revolutionary activities'; cf. *The Times*, December 6, p. 14 and December 7, p. 13.

## No. 282

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 8, 9 a.m.)*

*No. 265 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8383/732/18]*

BERLIN, December 7, 1934

Herr von Buelow told Italian Ambassador yesterday that Herr von Ribbentrop has returned to Berlin with the airs of a conqueror though he has not condescended to visit Ministry of Foreign Affairs. French Ambassador has succeeded in getting Herr Hess' visit to Paris postponed<sup>1</sup> but Herr Hitler has, I hear, agreed to receive shortly some more representatives of French ex-service men. I am doing my best by indirect means to discourage this visit as being calculated to embarrass the French government.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 244.

## No. 283

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 13)*

*No. 241 [R 7108/37/3]*

*Strictly confidential*

VIENNA, December 7, 1934

Sir,

Some days ago I decided that the time had come to include Herr von Papen among those whom I am inviting to this Legation, the season of official entertainment having begun.

2. Owing to the situation as regards Herr von Papen in Vienna being extremely delicate—apart from the relations of Germany with the Austrian Government the Catholic authorities are said to have forbidden more prominent Catholic families from entering into relations with Herr von Papen—I thought it best to inform my French and Italian colleagues of my intention so that there could be no misunderstanding. I explained to them that for the purpose of intercourse with Herr von Papen we must regard him as one of our colleagues and treat him with the usual courtesy accordingly. Both my colleagues expressed their entire agreement with my point of view, and seemed relieved to some extent that I was taking the lead in breaking the ice,



as they themselves were faced with the same problem. I have now invited Herr von Papen to lunch with me on December 15th, and have I think succeeded, with some difficulty, in collecting a society to meet him which should preclude the possibility of any untoward incident.

3. Last evening I was invited, with my wife, to a reception of the wife of the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs and became engaged in conversation with my American colleague,<sup>1</sup> with whom I am on close terms of friendship. In the midst of our conversation Herr von Papen suddenly appeared and thanked me warmly for my invitation, which he said he would be very glad to accept. I might say at this point that the attitude of my American colleague had somewhat stiffened. He accorded a very cold reception to Herr von Papen.

4. In response to an observation of mine that I thought he was in Berlin, Herr von Papen said he had returned that very morning. He then immediately plunged into a discussion of recent developments in the relations of the Powers, expressing great approval of the agreement which had been reached as regards the Saar. He asked me whether I did not think the development a favourable one. I replied that I did so, and hoped it was the precursor to the restoration of better relations between the Powers as a whole, for what was now required above all else was real collaboration among the Powers to enable confidence to be restored. Mr. Messersmith endorsed, in somewhat similar terms, what I had said; but he made it clear to Herr von Papen that there were reservations, and serious reservations, in so far as his own optimism was concerned. 'Certain Powers', said Mr. Messersmith, had by their action of late created a state of apprehension which it would require much time and patience to overcome.

5. Herr von Papen went on to express his warm approval of the recent debates in the House of Commons, somewhat to our surprise, as we both could not help but feel that parts of the declarations which had been made in the House of Commons could not have sounded quite so sweetly in German ears as Herr von Papen seemed disposed to persuade us to believe they had. Herr von Papen was, however, to all appearances enthusiastic. He felt that the debates would clear the air.

6. Mr. Messersmith here intervened to refer to the lack of security felt by many nations; observing that before real confidence could be restored there were such questions as the Polish/German and German/Austrian problems which must be disposed of. Herr von Papen then enquired what our view was as regards Austria. I replied that I felt convinced that the sole objective of my Government was that a solution should be found which would bring real peace to Austria and remove it from the picture as a potential danger to the peace of Europe. I did not wish to engage in controversy, but a few months ago it did appear as if Germany was claiming that Austria was solely her concern and not that of any other Power. So long as this point of view prevailed I feared that difficulties would exist to any real settlement. Mr. Messersmith was more explicit on the point than I had been, leaving Herr

<sup>1</sup> Mr. G. S. Messersmith.

von Papen under no misapprehension as to how he viewed the claim of Germany. Mr. Messersmith's intervention resulted in eliciting from Herr von Papen perhaps the most interesting observation made by him in the course of the whole conversation. His words were something to this effect: 'If the Powers would restore to Austria her real independence by suppressing the restrictive clauses of the peace treaties, Germany would equally respect Austrian independence.' Herr von Papen said he had made this quite clear to the Chancellor, Dr. von Schuschnigg. I thought it better not to pursue the point, but Mr. Messersmith intervened to point out that he considered this a very dangerous line of approach, and that if it became known it would greatly increase the misgiving which existed as regards Germany's intentions.

7. The conversation, which had by this lasted for some 20 minutes, was here interrupted by my wife, who was anxious to leave. I accordingly took leave of Herr von Papen, leaving him still in conversation with Mr. Messersmith. A few minutes later Mr. Messersmith joined me in the hall. He did not attempt to conceal his view that the conversation had made a most disagreeable impression upon him. 'He has not changed', said Mr. Messersmith, 'neither have they. It requires we should be as watchful as ever before.'<sup>2</sup>

8. Personally I do not altogether share Mr. Messersmith's pessimism. He may be right in his conclusion that 'Herr von Papen and they have not changed', but there is encouragement in at least one aspect of what Herr von Papen said. His delight over the debate in the House of Commons was at least significant, if German methods of diplomacy are borne in mind. The debate cannot have been as pleasing to Herr von Papen as he would have had us believe, and therefore one could not but reflect that he was perhaps resorting to the old device of making the best of a bad job, to hide a German discomfiture, always a salutary preliminary to any real agreement with Germany, especially the Germany of Herr Hitler, as the Saar settlement has recently proved.

9. No one can now question that Germany desires to tear up the whole peace settlement. Herr von Papen again tells us she intends to do so. This being so we must ensure that we control the timetable for any realisation of her aspirations that may be considered necessary or expedient,<sup>3</sup> and here debates such as have recently taken place in the House of Commons seem to

<sup>2</sup> For Mr. Messersmith's report of this conversation with Herr von Papen, see *F.R.U.S.*, 1934, vol. ii, pp. 54-7.

<sup>3</sup> In the first version of this despatch, received in the Foreign Office on December 13, the opening lines of paragraph 9 read: 'No one can quarrel with Germany desiring to tear up the whole peace settlement. Herr von Papen again tells us she intends to do so, but what one is entitled to question is the time-table and method of the operation.' In a minute dated December 18, Sir R. Vansittart described this observation as 'really stupefying' and said 'of course I repudiate it entirely'. He gave instructions that the copy of the despatch for confidential printing should be recalled, and paragraph 9 deleted. Following a personal telegram from Sir R. Vansittart of December 20, Sir Walford Selby forwarded on December 22 a revised version of the last page of his despatch in the form printed above.

be of the utmost use in inducing Germany to accept our programme rather than pursue the attempt to impose upon us her own.

10. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin.

I have, &c.,  
W. SELBY

#### No. 284

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 8, 12.10 p.m.)*  
*Unnumbered Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8386/74/18]*

GENEVA, December 8, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

1. The Council met in secret session this morning and discussed the question of the international force.

2. The Council will meet in public session this afternoon and pass a resolution deciding to invite the Governments of the United Kingdom, Italy, Holland and Sweden to participate in the international force and asking them to reply whether they accept the invitation.

3. The resolution will also entrust to the Committee of Three, augmented by representatives of the contributing Powers and by representatives of the Governing Commission and of the Secretariat-General, the study of the organisation of the force; and the Committee will be asked to report to the Council on the matter.<sup>1</sup>

4. The Committee will start work at once and will not wait for the replies from the contributing Powers to draw up a preliminary report. General Temperley has already drafted this report.

5. As reported by Sir H. Montgomery this morning, the Dutch Government has agreed to contribute to the force subject to a Swedish contribution being forthcoming.<sup>2</sup> The attitude of the Swedish Government is not yet known, but in Geneva there is an impression that the reply is likely to be favourable.

<sup>1</sup> In a further telegram from Geneva, No. 78 L.N. Saving of December 8, received on December 10, Mr. Eden reported that at the afternoon session it had been decided that the setting up of a sub-committee consisting of one representative of each of the invited countries, and Mr. Knox, was preferable to the enlargement of the Committee of Three originally proposed. Cf. *L/N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1729-30.

<sup>2</sup> This decision was telephoned to the Foreign Office at 10.50 a.m. on December 8 in telegram No. 22 from The Hague. For the Swedish Government's decision see No. 275, note 6.

No. 285

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 11)*  
*No. 1050 [C 8413/74/18]*

ROME, December 8, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to report that Signor Suvich, on the last two occasions on which I have seen him, has emphasised to me the importance, from the Italian point of view, that the vote of the Saar Plebiscite should not be overwhelmingly in Germany's favour. What he would like to see is not more than 65% of the inhabitants voting for Germany. He fears that if there is a majority of 75% to 80%, the effect on German mentality will be serious and that they will be so encouraged that they will again begin action against Austria. He told me that what he would like to obtain is a statement by the Council that if the Saar inhabitants voted in favour of the *status quo* at the present time, and after a period of years expressed a wish to return to Germany, the Council would in such an event be willing to hold a second plebiscite. He realises that His Majesty's Government are opposed to any such proposal, and I have given him no encouragement whatever during our conversations, but his insistence on the point makes it perhaps worth recording.

2. The Italian Government are clearly alarmed at the prospects of further German intervention in Austrian affairs. Indeed, what with Austria and other disputable matters, the fact is that Italo-German relations, while not actually strained, are at present in a bad way.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC DRUMMOND

No. 286

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 12, 2 p.m.)*  
*No. 80 L.N. Saving: Telegraphic [C 8485/74/18]*

GENEVA, December 11, 1934

Following from Mr. Eden.

My telegram No. 78 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

At Council meeting this afternoon Italian representative, in pursuance of the Council resolution of December [8],<sup>2</sup> presented the report of the Committee of Three which had been prepared in conjunction with its sub-committee on which General Temperley represented His Majesty's Government on the organisation and functions of the International Force for the Saar territory. The report and accompanying resolution,<sup>3</sup> the text<sup>4</sup> of which has been sent by bag, were unanimously adopted by the Council.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 284, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 284.

<sup>3</sup> See *L/N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1762-3.

<sup>4</sup> Received in the Foreign Office on December 13, not printed.

The Committee of Three met immediately after the Council in joint session with its sub-committee and despatched a telegram to the governments participating in the Force regarding the strength, composition, and command of the Force, and fixing the date before which the national contingents should arrive in the Saar.<sup>5</sup>

Subsequently, the sub-committee met to settle certain questions relating to the finance and administration of the International Force.

<sup>5</sup> The contingents were: United Kingdom 1,500, Italy 1,300, Netherlands 250, Sweden 250. The United Kingdom Government was requested to appoint the commander-in-chief of the international force and on December 12 nominated Major-General J. E. S. Brind. It was proposed that the contingents should reach the Saar Territory before December 22. Cf. *L/N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1840-2. For an account of the organization of this force, see A. C. Temperley, *The Whispering Gallery of Europe* (London, 1938), pp. 290-3.

## No. 287

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 170 Telegraphic [C 8548/3434/17]*

*Immediate. Secret*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 13, 1934, 3 a.m.*

My telegram No. 135 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

You should at once see M. Flandin and explain to him that we are greatly impressed by the importance of taking immediate advantage of the improved situation created by the successful solution of the Saar and Yugoslav questions at Geneva. There have, of course, been most important developments since my telegram above mentioned was sent, and we now feel that the moment has come when our two Governments should lose no time in making a common effort to carry this improvement a step further. As this clearly can best be done by personal meeting, we venture to revert to the idea that we discussed at the beginning of the month of an early visit by M. Flandin to London. Since I wrote to him on the 7th instant,<sup>2</sup> His Majesty's Government have had further opportunity of studying the problem of German rearmament and will now be glad to discuss it with the French Government whenever it is convenient to them.

<sup>1</sup> Of December 7, not printed. This telegram referred to recent correspondence relating to the possibility of a visit by M. Flandin to London early in December (e.g. to Foreign Office telegrams Nos. 159 and 160 of November 23 and 24, and Paris telegrams No. 127 of November 25 and No. 130 of November 30, not printed) and said: 'we would have been only too delighted to see M. Flandin if he had in any case been coming to England on a private visit. I do not candidly think that, though they may be so later on possibly early in the New Year, circumstances are yet such as to justify what would in fact be an official visit and a formal exchange of views.'

<sup>2</sup> This letter was sent in reply to M. Flandin's letter of December 1 to Sir J. Simon explaining why he could not, at that time, make a private visit to London. The gist of it was reproduced in Foreign Office telegram No. 135 Saving, see note 1 above.

2. In conveying this message to M. Flandin, you should remind him of his earlier suggestion to bring M. Laval with him.<sup>3</sup> Is he disposed to pay an official visit to London in order to have a general discussion on subjects interesting to both our Governments, and more particularly that of German rearmament? His Majesty's Government would be ready to welcome M. Flandin and M. Laval next week, that is to say, before the 21st, when the Christmas holidays begin, but failing that, they will be at their disposal any time after the New Year.

Repeated to Rome, No. 407.

<sup>3</sup> In his telegram No. 127 of November 25, Sir G. Clerk reported M. Flandin as saying that 'he was anxious for a general and formal conversation with the Prime Minister, yourself and the Chancellor of the Exchequer at which he would be accompanied by Monsieur Laval and Monsieur Léger'.

## No. 288

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 13, 7.15 p.m.)*  
*No. 138 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8563/3434/17]*

*Secret and Personal*

PARIS, December 13, 1934

Your telegram No. 170.<sup>1</sup>

I happened to have an appointment with Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning and have just returned from seeing him.

(2). M. Laval told me that, encouraged by result obtained at Geneva, general conception of foreign policy he now intended to pursue was as follows:

(3). He would work for principle of an agreement or declaration of respect for integrity of Austrian frontiers to be signed by France and Great Britain as Great Powers interested in peace of Europe and integrity of Austria, and by Italy, Hungary, Little Entente and Germany as neighbours. He said that he used 'Little Entente' deliberately instead of two neighbouring states of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia because the Little Entente was a factor with, as he put it, a soul of its own, and he was thinking out a formula which would enable Roumania, although not a neighbour of Austria, to sign such an agreement or pact as he had in mind.

(4). He was also going to try to obtain from Signor Mussolini a declaration similar to that made by you in your speech, I believe of October 19th, that integrity of Yugoslavia is an indispensable element in the peace of Europe.<sup>2</sup> He seemed from his conversations with Baron Aloisi to be fairly hopeful of success.

(5). If Signor Mussolini agreed in principle to these two points, then and not till then he would pay his visit to Rome and when there would try to get Italy to make a treaty of friendship and arbitration with Yugoslavia. Of

<sup>1</sup> No. 287.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 146, note 1.

course, it would also be essential that agreement in principle on the purely Franco-Italian questions was reached before the visit.

(6). Minister for Foreign Affairs realised that, although Signor Mussolini might agree in principle with these views, his hands were at present rather tied by his friendship with Hungary and that he would need time to bring Hungary round. M. Laval here observed that possibly His Majesty's Government might help in this.

(7). Assuming a successful issue to these plans, M. Laval then intends to get on with the Eastern Pact and to do all he can to get Germany to become parties to the Austrian declaration and the Pact. If Germany agrees, M. Laval will then, but not before, be ready to talk of German armaments with His Majesty's Government first of all, and then, depending on that discussion, generally.

(8). He considered that hitherto the cart had been put before the horse and that it had been useless to talk of disarmament before the several countries were sure of their security. Incidentally M. Laval said that Signor Mussolini had already agreed in principle to France having a margin of superiority in arms over Germany.

(9). M. Laval went on to say that M. Flandin had mentioned something to him about a visit to London to discuss various questions including armaments. His own view was that such a visit now would be inopportune, for he thought that it might be misinterpreted by public opinion in both countries. In France they might feel that His Majesty's Government were trying to press the French Government to accept German re-armament and in England he feared that public opinion might think French Government were seeking to involve Great Britain more closely on the Continent.

(10). Your telegram under reference reached me just as I was going to the Quai d'Orsay but in view of M. Laval's observations I made no mention of it and I have provisionally cancelled my request for an interview with President of the Council for which I had asked as in the light of what I have reported you may wish to reconsider your invitation.

Repeated to Rome. *Secret and Personal.*

## No. 289

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent*

[C 8891/20/18]

BERLIN, *December 13, 1934*

My dear Sargent,

The Belgian Minister, who has been talking to various people of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and others about rearmament, is perturbed to find that the German pretensions are growing apace. All said they wanted a Convention, but that of course 'the figures will be very different from those proposed last spring.'

I gather that the Germans will claim parity with France or England in the air. Adieu, therefore, to the halcyon days when Hitler only asked for 25% of his neighbours' air-forces, or 50% of the French, whichever was least!<sup>1</sup>

At sea, as reported in my telegram No. 254 Saving<sup>2</sup> of November 28th, I thought that I caught the figure of 35% of our fleet in Hitler's fevered outburst. This seems to me prodigiously greedy, since Germany has no overseas possessions to protect, so greedy indeed that I preferred to shut my ears, and pretended not to understand.

On land Thorne tells me that he does not think the Germans are likely to raise their pretensions above the 300,000 figure for the good reason that the coming (lean) yearly classes will limit them to that figure.

Yours ever,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the record of the Anglo-German conversation in Berlin on February 21, 1934 (Volume VI, No. 305, enclosure): Herr Hitler's proposal as there reported was for 30 per cent of the combined number of military aircraft possessed by Germany's neighbours or 50 per cent of the numbers possessed by the French. Cf. also Cmd. 4559, No. 6.

<sup>2</sup> No. 230.

## No. 290

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 14, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 395 Telegraphic [C 8565/20/18]*

ROME, December 14, 1934, 12.5 a.m.

Your telegram No. 408.<sup>1</sup>

I carried out your instructions this afternoon. Signor Mussolini seemed pleased at action taken by His Majesty's Government and at their intention as regards Italy.

I asked him whether Monsieur Laval's proposed visit to London would not interfere with latter's visit to Rome of which press here at the moment is full. His Excellency said no since an impasse had been reached in Franco-Italian conversations. As I knew questions could be divided into two categories. The first viz. those which interested France and Italy alone had, he was happy to say, been practically settled. Difficulty had occurred in regard to second category viz. questions of general European interest. To my remark that this seemed strange since present objective of Italy and France in Austrian question was identical, namely, her independence and integrity, Signor Mussolini assented but pointed out that difficulty lay in application of that principle. We then discussed at some length but inconclusively question of method of application.

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram of December 13, not printed, Sir E. Drummond was instructed to inform Signor Mussolini of His Majesty's Government's invitation to M. Flandin (see No. 287) and to assure him that he would be kept informed of the progress of any resulting Anglo-French discussions.



In talking of German re-armament Signor Mussolini regretted that so much time had been lost. Position of Entente Powers had deteriorated as a result of delay while Germans by acquisition of bombing aeroplanes had exceeded limits, which they had otherwise observed, mentioned at an early stage by Herr Hitler. Signor Mussolini regarded this addition as serious and summed up his views by saying that French must recognize a fait accompli and that there was no method now of reducing German armaments except by war.

Question of revision<sup>2</sup> was touched upon but His Excellency was not to be drawn to-day on Italian-Yugoslav relations.<sup>3</sup>

Full report of conversation<sup>4</sup> goes to you by bag.

Repeated to Paris.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. 'of treaties which have become inapplicable', as provided for in Article 19 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

<sup>3</sup> In his despatch No. 1063 of December 13 giving a somewhat fuller account of this interview, Sir E. Drummond wrote on this point: 'To draw him out I remarked that I could not help, as late Secretary-General of the League, being very happy and rather proud at the success which the League had recently had in regard to the Saar and the Yugoslav-Hungarian quarrel [see *L.N.O.J.*, December 1934, pp. 1759-60]. Signor Mussolini smiled and said that he would quote Sir Austen Chamberlain to me, namely, that the League was excellent when sparrows quarrelled, but would not avail if eagles fell out.'

<sup>4</sup> Received December 20, not printed; cf. note 3 above.

## No. 291

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 141 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8563/3434/17]*

*Secret and Personal*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 14, 1934, 6.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 138<sup>1</sup> of December 13th.

1. I agree that in view of the tenor of your conversation with M. Laval the formal invitation to M. Flandin cannot be given at the moment. I informed the French Ambassador privately on Wednesday<sup>2</sup> night that we were making this suggestion, so you may consider that it will be necessary for you to see M. Laval again. I leave it to your judgment whether it would not be more prudent also to give a short explanation to M. Flandin. Sir R. Vansittart has already explained the course of events to M. Corbin.

2. For your own information only, I am expecting to leave London next week with Lady Simon for a short holiday on the Continent, but my plans are not yet definitely made. If this plan is carried out it would be possible for me to spend some hours in Paris that day<sup>3</sup> and you might consider and advise me whether a meeting with M. Flandin and M. Laval at lunch at the Embassy would give a suitable opportunity for a short informal talk

<sup>1</sup> No. 288.

<sup>2</sup> December 12.

<sup>3</sup> The original draft had said that Sir J. and Lady Simon would be leaving London on 'Friday morning', the 21st.

afterwards. I assume that M. Laval will be in Paris till the end of the week. If he was not, it would still be possible for me to meet M. Flandin.

3. My call at Paris would not, of course, be a substitute for the official visit here, which ought to take place as soon as conditions are favourable.

M. Laval's conversation reported in your telegram under reference creates the impression that the French are prepared to let the question of German re-armament drift and are hoping to get contributions out of Germany, such as adherence to the Eastern Pact, without paying the necessary price. This is fundamentally opposed to the view of His Majesty's Government because we consider it illusory, and we must not lend ourselves to mere postponement when the present situation offers an opportunity of doing something definite. Time will not mend matters. It will only make matters worse if we do not act.

## No. 292

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 15, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 270 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8601/74/18]*

BERLIN, December 14, 1934

The arrival in the Saar of some British officers is reported in the press. The population is stated to have received the newcomers with cool reserve.

Photographs of British troops arriving at Calais are published under such headings as 'warlike preparations for a peaceful plébiscite'.

Lord Rothermere's article on the Saar<sup>1</sup> is published at full length in a number of newspapers.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to an article by Viscount Rothermere, chief proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, published in that newspaper on December 14, 1934. Cf. No. 294 below.

## No. 293

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 232 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 8382/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 15, 1934, 10.50 a.m.

Your telegrams Nos. 310<sup>1</sup> and 264 Saving.<sup>2</sup>

It is obviously undesirable that the German Government should be allowed to assume from the debate in House of Commons on November 28th that His Majesty's Government do not consider the disarmament clauses of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles to be any longer binding upon Germany.

This of course is not the case. His Majesty's Government do not recognise the right of any signatory to a treaty to free itself from the obligations imposed upon it without negotiation and agreement with the other signatories.

<sup>1</sup> No. 242.

<sup>2</sup> No. 281.

His Majesty's Government desire to leave German Government under no misapprehension on this point, and you should convey to them in such manner as you think best a communication on the foregoing lines.

You will appreciate that it is preferable for His Majesty's Government to avoid at the present moment a public statement in Parliament to this effect, as such a statement might encourage the French Government to adopt an uncompromising attitude in the discussions which we hope to have with them shortly.

**No. 294**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 18, 9 a.m.)*

*No. 272 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8759/27/18]*

**BERLIN, December 16, 1934**

Lord Rothermere is in Berlin and is being received by the Führer. Today's 'Völkischer Beobachter' gives him a prominent and cordial front-page welcome as a far-seeing political personage who is convinced of the vital necessity of close Anglo-German co-operation.

We met Lord Rothermere and his son yesterday at a large luncheon-party given by Herr and Frau von Ribbentrop. Amongst those present were the Duke and Duchess of Brunswick, Dr. and Frau Goebbels and Mr. Ward Price.<sup>1</sup>

On emerging from the dining-room I found myself standing in a small group in which our host was translating Dr. Goebbels to Lord Rothermere and vice-versa. The former began by expressing his warm thanks for the latter's article on the Saar in the 'Daily Mail' of the 14th instant. This article merely announced to the world that His Lordship had discovered the Saar to be Germanic in character and sentiment, so no comment on my part was necessary. The Minister for Propaganda then, however, proceeded to thank Lord Rothermere effusively for advocating the return to Germany of her colonies. I thereupon remarked (in both languages) that His Majesty's Government had no intention whatever of returning any of those colonies, nor would British public opinion tolerate such a proceeding. Dr. Goebbels somewhat awkwardly replied that their return was not now in the forefront of the German government's programme; but that Germans were nevertheless very pleased and grateful to read such 'objective' pronouncements in the British press. I said that I could not think such pronouncements served any useful purpose, for they might merely arouse German hopes that were destined to be dashed.

Lord Rothermere ejaculated a Socialist government would soon come to power in England. After stating my conviction that a Labour government would not pursue a different policy on the point at issue, I joined the ladies,

<sup>1</sup> Berlin Correspondent of the *Daily Mail*.

leaving our host to continue his interpreter's task in a corner of the drawing-room in more private and comfortable surroundings, and in an idyllic and unruffled atmosphere of complete Anglo-German misunderstanding.

**No. 295**

*Sir W. Erskine (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 21)*

*No. 489 [C 8770/247/18]*

WARSAW, *December 16, 1934*

Sir,

I have the honour to report that I was received in farewell audience by the President of the Republic at the Zamek [Palace] on the 14th instant and presented to him my letters of recall.<sup>1</sup> The proceedings were quite informal, and in the conversation which followed no political subjects were referred to. After the audience, I and my wife and daughters were entertained at luncheon, and I was able to have a brief conversation with M. Beck, who was among the guests, on the subject of the Eastern Pact. Referring to the conversation which, as you informed me in your Saving telegram No. 11<sup>2</sup> of the 9th [6th] December, you had with the Polish Ambassador on the 3rd instant, I said I hoped that he had given favourable consideration to your views.

2. While admitting that the recent French note<sup>3</sup> had met some of the objections of the Polish Government to the proposal, His Excellency made it plain that the concessions offered did not suffice to make it acceptable to them. It would not, he said, create an atmosphere of security in North-Eastern Europe. Having originated with M. Litvinov, it was thoroughly suspect. This was particularly the case as regards the Baltic States, including Finland, and it was significant that, while France offered to guarantee Russian security, no such guarantee was extended to those small States. They consequently regarded the pact as threatening them with a Russian hegemony. He considered that the project had been conceived in haste and without sufficient preparation and study, and he regarded it as still-born. In any case, he felt sure that Germany would not accept it.

3. He went on, however, to say that he did not exclude the possibility of adhering to some such pact in the future. But it would have to be of a rather different kind and the negotiations would have to start afresh from the beginning. I entirely failed to draw from him anything definite as to the lines on which such a pact should be constructed in order to be satisfactory. I asked him if I was right in thinking that one of his reasons for disliking the project was that it might open the door for the passage of the Red Army across Polish territory, reminding him at the same time that the Covenant of the League of Nations also contained a provision which contemplated the same contingency. M. Beck brushed aside this suggestion, saying that he had not even given it a thought. None the less, I believe that this consideration

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Erskine was retiring from the diplomatic service on January 1, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> No. 265.

<sup>3</sup> Of November 26; cf. No. 188, note 4.

and the probability that in the event of a war between France and Germany, in which Russia would have to intervene on behalf of France, it would lead to Poland becoming the battleground between Germany and Russia is the main Polish objection to the pact. It seems to me, indeed, that Poland's fears in this respect are not unjustified.

4. The French Ambassador, with whom I was dining last night, told me, as I reported in my telegram No. 53<sup>4</sup> of the 16th instant, that he had received instructions to ask for a definite reply to his recent note and that he had called on M. Beck for the purpose on the previous day. The conversation had, he said, been unsatisfactory. It had lasted an hour and twenty minutes, and during most of the time M. Beck had, as usual, talked round the question. It was only with the greatest difficulty that M. Laroche had extracted anything precise from him. He did not go into details in our short conversation, but mentioned that M. Beck had made two statements—the first, that he did not object to the principle of a pact, and, the second, that he was not prepared to agree to the present project in principle. The first of these statements goes to confirm what he said to me as to the possibility of Poland's adhering to a pact in the future, as reported above. As regards the second, it might be thought that, as the Polish Government are convinced and have no doubt already consulted the German Government on the subject—that Germany will definitely reject the pact—they might themselves safely accept it in principle in order to restore their relations with France to their former cordiality. I believe that their reason for not doing so is that it would inevitably compromise their relations with Germany, who would resent their thus assisting France in her attempt to throw on to Germany the whole responsibility for the failure of her policy. The present Polish rapprochement with Germany is a young and delicate plant, which requires careful handling, whereas the Polish Government believe—perhaps wrongly—that the alliance with France is indispensable to the latter country and can therefore stand some rough treatment without fatal injury.

5. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Paris and Berlin.

I have, &c.,  
WILLIAM ERSKINE

<sup>4</sup> Not printed. Sir W. Erskine also reported in that telegram that M. Laroche was leaving for Paris on December 16 to discuss the situation with M. Laval.

## No. 296

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 18, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 274 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8643/74/18]*

BERLIN, December 17, 1934

The German official news bureau telegraphed a lengthy report of the Saarbrücken incident as well as the version of the President of the Governing

Commission<sup>1</sup> to the press this morning. Great prominence is naturally being given to the episode. According to the 'D.N.B.' a drunken British police officer drove a motor car so carelessly as to injure four pedestrians including a woman with child and subsequently shot a civilian before the crowd succeeded in overpowering him.

In a semi-official comment on Mr. Knox's statement the 'D.N.B.', while endorsing his concluding paragraph, challenges his version of the incident itself.

The 'D.N.B.' also reports a second incident of minor importance, namely a quarrel between Captain Hemsley, of the Saar police, and Prince Löwenstein, an emigré.<sup>2</sup>

The press this evening attacks Mr. Knox on the ground that he recruited the International Police and is therefore directly responsible.

The 'Berliner Tageblatt' points out that the police officer in question is not a member of the new police force now being drafted into the Saar from England, but one of Mr. Knox's special constables.

The 'Angriff' under the heading 'drunken English police officer fires on a Saar crowd' states that, unlike Germans, Englishmen under the influence of drink have no sense of discipline as those who lived in Cologne during the English occupation are well aware.

The 'Börsen Zeitung' as may be expected, devotes a column and a half to Mr. Knox. At the same time it publishes his official report to which it appends the following apparently semi-official statement which is somewhat at variance with its earlier remarks and those of other organs of the press:—

'Mr. Knox has lost no time in issuing a statement and we hope that the incomplete and in many points quite inaccurate account will not prejudice the forthcoming enquiry. Presumably Mr. President Knox has obtained fuller information in the meantime. Nevertheless we unreservedly endorse the concluding paragraph, all the more as it betrays greater insight into what actually transpired and leaves the question of blame open.'

<sup>1</sup> The official communiqué issued by Mr. Knox said that in the night of December 15–16 a police officer in turning a corner with his car 'injured a woman who was standing on the pavement', a crowd gathered, and 'for a reason which has not been entirely and definitely cleared up, assumed a threatening attitude', 'shots were fired, one of the crowd being slightly wounded', and the police officer 'was beaten by the crowd and taken to hospital'. The concluding paragraph stated that the police had received 'special instructions to proceed in the matter with all severity and the police officer concerned has been suspended until the matter is finally cleared up'. The officer was not reinstated. Cf. 296 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 819–23.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Browne's telegram No. 4 of December 18 from Saarbrücken reported that Mr. Knox had asked for and received Major Hemsley's resignation.

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 21)*

*No. 1468 [C 8772/20/18]*

BERLIN, December 17, 1934

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you, herewith, a copy of an interesting despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Munich<sup>1</sup> on the subject of the present position and future development of this country.

2. It will be seen that in paragraph 4 of his despatch Mr. Gainer states that the total strength of the Reichswehr<sup>2</sup> is, according to his information, now between 300,000 and 350,000. It is dangerous to be categorical about figures and strength of the Reichsheer, but the Military Attaché informs me that responsible officers in the Reichswehrministerium have deliberately told a number of his colleagues in the last few days that the Reichsheer are not yet up to the 300,000 mark. Baron von Neurath said the same thing to me in the interview recorded in my telegram No. 296<sup>3</sup> of 27th November. The Ministry seem to have the necessary officers and N.C.O.'s in readiness but not the men and the actual strength to-day is probably about 220,000.

3. When Mr. Gainer goes on to speak of '100,000 fully trained men chiefly from the S.S. and other para-military bodies', he is embarking upon a difficult calculation which is of little value, unless it is carried through most thoroughly, and this only the experts in the War Office are in a position to do. From the post-war ex-Reichsheer soldiers alone there are available many more than 100,000 fully trained men, while if he is really referring primarily to S.S. men, there are, as he himself has reported, only 22,000 at present in permanent militarised formations.

4. Mr. Gainer's remarks regarding the Air Force<sup>4</sup> must similarly be treated with reserve. The figure given by Mr. Baldwin in the recent debate<sup>5</sup> for the number of 'fully trained pilots' was doubtless based upon carefully prepared advice from the Air Intelligence Section of the Air Ministry. It must be remembered that merely learning to fly does not constitute a 'fully trained' Air Force pilot. There is much else required before a degree of efficiency comparable with established Air Forces is reached, and this consideration naturally justifies a conservative estimate.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>1</sup> Munich despatch No. 227 of December 4, not printed.

<sup>2</sup> This word read 'Reichsheer' in Mr. Gainer's despatch.

<sup>3</sup> No. 216.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Gainer wrote: 'As regards the air forces, the number of fully trained pilots is held to be larger than the figure suggested by Mr. Baldwin, as training has been going on for over two years, i.e., before the advent of the present regime, and has since then been very much accelerated.'

<sup>5</sup> A reference presumably to the debate in the House of Commons on November 28; see 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 875-6, 880, and 882-4.

*Letter from Sir R. Vansittart to Sir F. Leith-Ross*  
[C 8738/90/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 17, 1934*

My dear Leithers,

As you know, I have only just got back from leave and I am necessarily not yet *au courant* with all that has been happening in my absence. In this condition of being without all the essential information, I have been led to indulge in some uneasy speculation on reading the answers given on December 11th by the Chancellor to Boothby's P.Q.<sup>1</sup> about the proposed 'loan' of the Bank of England to Germany and by the President of the Board of Trade to Sir Eugene Ramsden's question about the liquidation of frozen debts under the Anglo-German Payments Agreement of November 1st.<sup>2</sup>

As I understand the position, under Article 4 of the Payments Agreement of November 1st the Reichsbank was to provide immediately a sum of not less than £400,000 towards the liquidation of outstanding debts. That advance was duly effected, though, it was I understand, made possible by the Bank of England, which put up the money on the security of sterling payments due to Germany from this country.

Article 4 of the Payments Agreement also stated that the Reichsbank would 'further' make every endeavour to expedite the liquidation of the outstanding debts and of the sondermarks by the realization of outstanding German commercial claims on the United Kingdom, whether by a credit operation or otherwise. It appears from what the President of the Board of Trade told Sir Eugene Ramsden on December 11th that an amount of £1,414,000<sup>3</sup> has now been 'made available by the German Government' towards the liquidation of outstanding trade debts. This extra million, or at any rate the greater part of it, has, so we understand, also been provided by the Bank of England, but on what security is not stated.

It is, no doubt, not our business to decide on what security the Bank of England ought to give credits to the Reichsbank, but there is one aspect of this particular matter which I must frankly confess I find very disquieting. Do you not feel that the granting of this new loan or credit to the Reichsbank by the Bank of England may perhaps create an inconvenient precedent whereby the Bank will, whenever necessary, be expected, both by British exporters and German importers, to make good Germany's commercial bad debts?

Is it not also only too probable on present form that Dr. Schacht will find himself unable to reimburse the Bank of England when settling-day comes and that in the long run the Exchequer will have to take over the loan from

<sup>1</sup> For the Parliamentary Question by the Member of Parliament for East Aberdeenshire, see 296 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 207.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.*, col. 199, for the question by the Member of Parliament for Bradford North.

<sup>3</sup> This figure reads £1,400,000 in 296 *H.C. Deb.*, *op. cit.*



the Bank of England, just as they virtually took over the loan made by the Bank some years ago to Austria?<sup>4</sup>

Is there not further a danger that the knowledge that these Bank of England credits exist may encourage British exporters to sell to Germany without taking the precautions which they otherwise would of making sure beforehand of being paid by their customers, and that thus we shall end by fostering an unhealthy and unbalanced trade, which may eventually lead to political complications?

In fact, is it altogether inconceivable that H.M. Government might as a result of all this gradually be manoeuvred into some regular system of guaranteeing the payment in sterling of the British export trade to Germany? I hope you won't think me hyper-suspicious if I say that all along I have been wondering whether Dr. Schacht has not been aiming at something of the sort and there seems some basis now for a surmise that he is trying to achieve this object by means of the Payments Agreement.

I have been so impressed by the unpleasant potentialities indicated above that I feel I must put my misgivings on record in a letter to you. I wish you would tell me whether you are really satisfied with this further operation of the Bank of England? If you really are, I should be most grateful if you could say something to put my mind at rest for the Christmas holidays.<sup>5</sup>

Yours ever,

R. VANSITTART

<sup>4</sup> A reference presumably to the interim advance by the Bank of England on June 16, 1931, of 150 million schillings to the Austrian National Bank pending negotiations for an international loan to the Austrian Government to provide it with funds to guarantee the liabilities of the Credit-Anstalt, the leading commercial bank of Austria. Cf. Volume II, No. 51, note 1 on p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> No copy of Sir F. Leith-Ross's reply has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

## No. 299

*Letter from Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Mr. Sargent (Received December 22)*<sup>1</sup>  
[C 8794/20/18]

PARIS, December 17, 1934

My dear Sargent,

Thank you very much for your letter of December 13th.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst I can understand that Chastenet thinks, as do many Frenchmen, that the French note of April 17th was a mistake, I rather doubt whether he would find much, if any, support here for re-opening the disarmament

<sup>1</sup> Date of filing in the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> In this letter, not printed, Mr. Sargent informed Sir G. Clerk that M. Chastenet, editor of the *Temps* who was on a short visit to London, had told him and also Sir R. Vansittart that 'he realised that the French Note of April 17th [Volume VI, No. 395, enclosure] . . . had been a great mistake'. M. Chastenet had given 'the impression of realising that the existence of this Note should not stand in the way of the whole question of disarmament being re-opened'.

question at the present moment except on conditions which the French believe to be unobtainable.

2. When I saw Flandin last night to give him the Secretary of State's message about Saturday,<sup>3</sup> I took the opportunity to rub in that, according to my information Mussolini was not proving very favourably inclined to the idea of the Little Entente participating in the Austrian guarantee, and that Beck was apparently still very tepid on the subject of the Eastern Pact, so that it looked like being a long time before any resumption of disarmament discussion, if the French programme was adhered to. On the other hand, I was sure that in London the view was strongly held that it was of great importance to profit by the present détente to carry the general improvement in the European atmosphere further. Flandin did not make any comment.

3. While, so far as occasion offers, I will continue to impress on the French the importance which His Majesty's Government attach to speed in the matter, I think I should let you know what seems to me to be their point of view. At the London conversations last July<sup>4</sup> it was agreed that the Eastern Pact proposals should be put before the Germans and the Poles and that, if they were accepted, the ground would be favourable for a resumption of disarmament conversations. His Majesty's Government blessed the Eastern Pact although they declined to participate in it. Since that date the French have been steadily working to secure Polish and German accession: undeterred by the first refusals, they have returned to the charge and still hope to secure agreement if only to a somewhat emasculated Eastern Pact. They will argue that they are not trying to evade the question of German disarmament, but that this line of advance must first be proved to be definitely hopeless. Laval, whose policy is different in manner rather than in matter from that of Barthou, in his speech in the Chamber on November 30,<sup>5</sup> made Germany's accession to the Pact the acid test of her sincerity.

4. The introduction of the Austrian and Italian questions into the French programme as matters which must also first be settled is certainly a new development, but if Germany and Poland were frankly and fully to accept the Eastern Pact as we recommended them to do, I should not despair of getting the French to discuss legalising German re-armament without much further delay. It must be remembered that the view has always been held here, rightly or wrongly, that Germany would feel more disposed to see the advantages of coming into the Pact *after* the Saar plebiscite has taken place and the intention has been all along not to resume discussion with her until after January 13th. The Franco-Italian negotiations have been speeded up as a result of the good impression created by the last Council meeting, which

<sup>3</sup> In telegram No. 173 of December 15 to Paris, Sir G. Clerk was informed that Sir John and Lady Simon would be arriving in Paris by air on Saturday morning, December 22, and leaving for a short holiday in Cannes the same evening, and that it 'would be very suitable' for them to meet M. Flandin and M. Laval at luncheon as suggested. Sir J. Simon considered that M. Flandin should know confidentially that His Majesty's Government had contemplated inviting him to England that week (cf. No. 288, paragraph 10). See also No. 291.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume VI, Nos. 487-90.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 241, note 2.

duced the hope, still held, I believe, though more faintly, that Laval's visit to Rome to seal the final agreement might easily take place before the Plebiscite.

5. What I think is at the back of the French mind is this: they know well that His Majesty's Government are anxious to start conversations for the legalising of German re-armament and for Germany's return to the League; they believe that Great Britain cannot accept any further commitments in connexion with guarantees of security in Europe beyond those indicated in the British Plan of last spring; and they fear that conversations can only lead to a fresh breakdown and to the early termination of the Franco-British-Italian co-operation which is now having such excellent effects in Europe.

6. For, on the question of security, France has not budged. No French Government could at present sign and survive an agreement legalising German re-armament without first providing for security. Flandin told Tyrrell<sup>6</sup> last week that Herriot and Marin<sup>7</sup> would both resign and overthrow the Government if he did any such thing. Rather than legalise German re-armament and bind themselves without what they regard as adequate security, I believe the French Government would prefer Germany to continue re-arming and France to go on with her present plan of seeking security by means of agreements in the East and Centre of Europe. For if Germany and Poland refuse to enter the Eastern Pact, France will almost certainly fall back on a more or less veiled bilateral agreement with the Soviets, partly because it appears to them to offer the only alternative form of security and partly because of fear that the Soviets, if released, might conclude a bilateral agreement with Germany.

7. There are undoubtedly many important factors, notably the financial and economic situation and the shortage of manpower from 1935, which makes the early conclusion of a di[s]armament convention very desirable for France. There is also a growing body of opinion outside Parliament among ex-servicemen and the younger generation which favours rapprochement with Germany. Yet on this question of security I believe there is practically unanimity.

8. Present French policy, laboured, unsatisfactory and slow as it seems to us, is based on the assumption that British policy in respect of further European commitments has not changed and will not change. If British policy changed, as it changed in the Saar,<sup>8</sup> an entirely new situation would arise. But short of that, I fear we shall have the greatest difficulty in getting the French to alter either their methods or their tempo. After all their policy was evolved as a result of the breakdown in April; we blessed that policy in July; in French eyes it has not yet finally broken down and there has not yet been any fundamental change in the situation such as to justify them in discarding it.

Yours ever

GEORGE R. CLERK

<sup>6</sup> Lord Tyrrell had been H.M. Ambassador at Paris from 1928 until his retirement from the Diplomatic Service in April 1934.

<sup>7</sup> M. Louis Marin was Minister of State without portfolio in M. Flandin's ministry.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. e.g. No. 169, note 5, and No. 261, note 1.

No. 300

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 19, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 341 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8685/20/18]*

PARIS, December 18, 1934

The importance which His Majesty's Government are known to attach to an early resumption of disarmament discussions and the expectation that they will shortly urge the French Government to resume conversations on the subject appear to be responsible for a certain amount of discreet ventilation of the question in the French press designed to indicate that France is not absolutely opposed to early discussion of the subject provided that the question of security is faced.

2. The London correspondent of the 'Figaro' states that, if the legalisation of Germany's re-armament is the only means of checking it, it is inconceivable that the counterpart should not be her return to Geneva and the giving of full satisfaction to France's demand for security. Under Pertinax's<sup>1</sup> article in the 'Echo de Paris' also is a note bearing his stamp, though not signed by him, bringing out that the French Government cannot alienate the freedom of their military decisions without an appreciable 'quid pro quo'.

<sup>1</sup> *Nom de plume* of the French journalist, M. André Géraud.

No. 301

*Foreign Office Memorandum<sup>1</sup>*  
[R 7228/37/3]

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 18, 1934

It is common ground that respect by all her neighbours for the independence of Austria is of the utmost importance.

The latest plan favoured by M. Laval is a declaration<sup>2</sup> of respect for the integrity of Austrian territory to be signed by the Little Entente and Hungary as well as by France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom and is regarded unfavourably by Signor Mussolini on the grounds (a) that the

<sup>1</sup> A minute on the file reads: 'The S. of S. has taken a copy of this Memorandum for his journey to Paris. R. A. Gallop 21/12.' Cf. No. 299, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Note in original*: 'It is not clear whether this plan is to be a treaty of *guarantee* such as proposed by M. Barthou in September, or merely a treaty of non-aggression and non-interference without sanctions. It is also not clear from the text of Paris telegram No. 138 [No. 288] whether all are to sign on the same footing or whether there are to be two classes of signatories (1) neighbours (2) other great powers interested. The words of the telegram are "... declaration of respect for integrity of Austrian frontiers to be signed by France and Great Britain as Great Powers interested in peace of Europe and integrity of Austria, and by Italy, Hungary, Little Entente and Germany as neighbours".'

inclusion of Roumania is inadmissible, and (b) that any plan which put the Great Powers and Minor Powers on the same footing would be inappropriate, and (c) that many Austrians would be driven into the Nazi camp if Austrian independence were made to appear in any degree dependent on Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, who are detested by her.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, no great confidence is felt outside Italy in the Italian policy, which seems to consist in (1) economic cooperation between Austria, Hungary and Italy, (2) support of the Heimwehr and (3) assertion by the Great Powers of their right to intervene severally, on the invitation of the Austrian Government, in the event of Austrian independence being threatened.

His Majesty's Government can enter into no new commitments but are ready to promote and give countenance to any generally acceptable plan providing for a declaration of non-interference and/or a guarantee for the independence of Austria by her neighbours. This would involve the adherence of Germany, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. If a guarantee plan is adopted, His Majesty's Government would take the view (likely to be approved by France, but opposed by Italy) that the guarantee should operate through the Council of the League of Nations. If a declaration of non-interference only is decided on, the question of the League need not arise.

It looks from recent remarks by Herr von Papen in Vienna that the German attitude is going to be this: that Germany will adhere to any reasonable scheme for the maintenance of Austrian independence, provided that this independence is first made a reality.<sup>4</sup> This presumably implies abrogation of Article 80 of the Treaty of Versailles<sup>5</sup> and Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain,<sup>6</sup> and probably also cessation of the *de facto* control exercised by Italy in Austrian internal affairs.

The possibility should be examined of inducing Germany to abandon this disingenuous attitude and genuinely support the independence of Austria as part of a wider agreement in respect of disarmament.

Failing this, a declaration should be signed by as many Powers as possible, which, if Germany stands out, will place her publicly in the wrong.

This declaration should be one of non-aggression and non-interference only. If it covered also a guarantee implying the use of force it would encounter the Italian objection to the inclusion of Yugoslavia. If it is confined to non-aggression and non-interference, the right to signature can on geographical grounds reasonably be confined to limitrophe Powers. If the right to signature depends upon geography, Italian objections to standing on a political par with Yugoslavia might be more readily overcome. In this way

<sup>3</sup> The attitude of Signor Mussolini, as summarized in this paragraph, was reported to the Foreign Office in Rome telegram No. 396 of December 14, not printed.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 283, paragraph 6.

<sup>5</sup> This article read: 'Germany acknowledges and will respect strictly the independence of Austria, within the frontiers which may be fixed in a Treaty between that State and the Principal Allied and Associated Powers; she agrees that this independence shall be inalienable, except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations.'

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 110, note 3.

too the claim that all three Little Entente countries must come in as a unit would be countered. A joint declaration of non-aggression and non-interference signed by limitrophe powers and blessed by France and the United Kingdom would seem therefore, to be the maximum which could by agreement between the United Kingdom, France and Italy be proposed to Germany.

**No. 302**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 21)*

*No. 1471 [C 8773/20/18]*

BERLIN, *December 18, 1934*

Sir,

With reference to my telegram No. 313<sup>1</sup> of December 17th, I have the honour to inform you that it appeared to me desirable to embody the substance of your telegram No. 232 in a written communication, in order to ensure that due weight should be given to it by the German Government. On the other hand the despatch of a formal note was open to the objection that the appreciation of the German reaction given in my telegrams Nos. 310<sup>2</sup> and 264 Saving<sup>3</sup> was not based on any official utterance or expression of opinion. The German Ambassador's request to the Marquess of Londonderry<sup>4</sup> that his service attachés should be treated as air attachés, which might otherwise have been quoted, was made before the debate in the House of Commons.

2. I therefore decided to make the required notification in the form of a private letter to Baron von Neurath, of which I have the honour to enclose a copy herein.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

ENCLOSURE IN No. 302

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps to Baron von Neurath*

BERLIN, *December 17, 1934*

My dear Baron von Neurath,

His Majesty's Government have noticed a tendency in certain quarters abroad to draw from the debate in the House of Commons on 28th of November last the erroneous conclusion that they do not consider the disarmament clause of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles to be any longer binding on Germany.

I have therefore been directed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform Your Excellency that this is of course not the case, and that my Government do not recognise the right of any signatory of a Treaty to free

<sup>1</sup> This telegram stated that Sir E. Phipps had embodied the substance of Foreign Office telegram No. 232 (No. 293) in a private letter to the German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> No. 242.

<sup>3</sup> No. 281.

<sup>4</sup> Secretary of State for Air.

itself from obligations imposed upon it without negotiation and agreement with the other signatories.

Yours very sincerely,  
ERIC PHIPPS

**No. 303**

*Letter from Mr. Charles (Moscow) to Mr. Baxter (Received December 28)*<sup>1</sup>  
[C 8892/247/18]

MOSCOW, December 18, 1934

Dear Baxter,

Many thanks for your letter of the 13th instant regarding Soviet-German financial negotiations.<sup>2</sup>

We learn confidentially from the German Embassy that negotiations have been proceeding for some time at Berlin in regard to further German credits for the Soviet Union. These negotiations were interrupted for some time but are now likely to be resumed when the new Soviet trade representative, M. Kandelaki, arrives in Berlin from Stockholm.

At present it appears that the German Government are prepared to give credits amounting to 200 million marks for orders placed in Germany over and above the ordinary yearly orders placed in that country. (The amount of these has dwindled considerably of late; the total orders last year came to about 49 million marks). The credits will be for five years, though the Soviet Government have asked for a longer period and the interest is likely to be 6 to 6½%.

One or two differences are to be introduced in the new arrangement. For instance, formerly, the German Government stood guarantee to the German firms for 60% of the orders; now 70% of the orders will be paid to the Soviet Government<sup>3</sup> who will in future (if the agreement goes through) pay direct

<sup>1</sup> Date of filing in the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> Following Sir J. Simon's interview with M. Corbin on December 4 (cf. No. 253), it was decided to consult Berlin and Moscow privately as to the Soviet-German financial discussions. Mr. Baxter's letter of December 13 to Mr. Newton at Berlin, not printed, a copy of which was sent on the same day to Mr. Charles, referred to a recent report from Mr. G. P. Paton, the Commercial Counsellor in Moscow, of the substance of a conversation with Herr Hilger, of the German Embassy in Moscow. From this it appeared 'that the Soviet Government were pressing for a loan but that the Germans were not disposed to grant it; though they were ready to continue to give credits as in the past'. A copy of this report had been received in the Foreign Office on October 26 as enclosure in Moscow despatch No. 525 E of October 22, not printed. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. ii, pp. 864-5.

<sup>3</sup> There is a reference sign here, in the original letter, to the following postscript: 'This is how my informant in the German Embassy put it; but it all sounds somewhat vague as it will be seen from Paton's memorandum, enclosed in my despatch No. 525 E [cf. note 2] of the 22nd October last, that the Soviet Government still owe Germany (as at the beginning of 1935) the sum of 229 million marks plus any sums incurred since the date of that memorandum.'

to the firms. The idea of the Soviet Government is that they will be able to get better terms from the firms. Another point is the question of arbitration. In case of dispute a German was formerly called in to arbitrate. The Soviet Government are now demanding that a Russian should be appointed. The Germans may propose that a neutral be called in.

This information was given in strictest confidence. The German Embassy suspect that the Soviet Government wish to use these negotiations as a weapon to hurry up the French in coming to a trade agreement and also possibly to let the Germans think that they are not such bad fellows after all and that it is about time for the two countries to smooth over their difficulties.

If we learn any further details about the negotiations, we shall, of course, let you know. There is no question of a loan from Germany to this country. We did not tell the German Embassy what M. Litvinov told M. Laval<sup>4</sup> and we are inclined to agree with them that M. Litvinov is up to his old tricks of playing one country up against the other.

Yours sincerely,  
NOEL CHARLES

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 253.

#### No. 304

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 19, 12.30 p.m.)  
No. 316 Telegraphic [C 8699/20/18]*

BERLIN, December 19, 1934, 12.20 p.m.

My telegram No. 313.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs had replied by private letter<sup>2</sup> saying that if legal question of validity of part 5<sup>3</sup> is raised the questions to be considered can, in view of the whole development of problem of disarmament, only be whether other Powers have fulfilled their treaty disarmament obligations after example set by Germany and whether these Powers feel themselves entitled to contest Germany's equality [of] rights.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See No. 302, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> In the opening sentences of this letter of December 18, not printed, Baron von Neurath mentioned Sir E. Phipps's reference to the views 'in certain circles' (cf. No. 302, enclosure) and said 'I do not know which circles your Government has in mind'.

<sup>3</sup> Of the Treaty of Versailles.

<sup>4</sup> In a minute of December 22 Mr. F. V. Perowne remarked that the contents of this letter 'are almost meaningless'.



No. 305

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 21, 10.15 a.m.)*  
*No. 277 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8747/20/18]*

BERLIN, *December 20, 1934*

Your despatch No. 597 to Brussels<sup>1</sup> of November 13th and my Savingram No. 248<sup>2</sup> of November 19th.

The Belgian Minister leaves tonight for Brussels to attend there tomorrow the postponed meeting with the Belgian Ambassadors in London and Paris referred to in the above.

I gather from Count Kerchove that the chief object of this meeting, apart from the inevitable 'tour d'horizon' so dear to foreign diplomatists, will be to discuss German rearmament.

From what Count Kerchove tells me, the views of the Belgian government on this question practically coincide with our own. The Belgians may therefore be very useful in helping to bring round the French gently but surely to a conviction that a Convention for a limitation of armaments, with its accompanying appeasement, is better than a race limited only by the financial capacity of Germany.

Repeated to Brussels No. 3 (Saving).

<sup>1</sup> No. 182.

<sup>2</sup> No. 195.

No. 306

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 1949 [C 8654/20/17]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 20, 1934*

Sir,

The French Ambassador called to see Sir Robert Vansittart on the 14th December and spoke at once of the suggestion of a visit by M. Flandin to London, of which the Secretary of State had informed him orally on the evening of the 12th December.<sup>1</sup>

2. Sir Robert Vansittart took the opportunity to explain to M. Corbin how matters had developed, and, in particular, gave him an account of your Excellency's telegram No. 138<sup>2</sup> of the 13th December, which had practically crossed our invitation. The Ambassador enquired what was going to happen now, and Sir Robert Vansittart told him of the substance of the reply which was just being despatched to you in my telegram No. 141 Saving.<sup>3</sup>

3. The Ambassador said that he had had, of course, no opportunity of talking of such things with M. Laval, but that he was personally a little apprehensive of a meeting at this stage, because he thought that there must

<sup>1</sup> See No. 291.

<sup>2</sup> No. 288.

<sup>3</sup> No. 291.

be as a result of it either a cautious, or even anodyne, communiqué, which would cause disappointment and criticism, or else, and far more probably, that the press would immediately learn everything that had transpired, though they might learn it more or less [? in] accurately. His own inclination, and he emphasised again that he was speaking personally and quite unofficially, would have been rather to prepare the ground by the ordinary diplomatic channels and to have the meeting at a later stage, preferably not before the Saar plebiscite. He explained that he thought that event would have a considerable influence on the sequel. Either the Germans would get an overwhelming majority and would become unmanageable on the strength of a runaway victory, or, if the majority was only a small one, their truculence would sink and they might become more amenable to reason.

4. Sir Robert Vansittart said that, of course, there was much to be said for M. Corbin's reasoning, but there was also the other side of the picture. He had only just returned to work,<sup>4</sup> so that he also was speaking personally and unofficially, and perhaps even with a less full knowledge of recent developments than the Ambassador possessed. His own personal impression was that it was at least likely that the German Government might approach us both again shortly after the Saar plebiscite. Unless some understanding had been reached between us before then, we might find ourselves in an awkward position, for unless such an approach were followed up, the Germans might turn it to tactical advantage, particularly as time was running out, and Sir Robert Vansittart felt that any such opportunity, whether it was offered by the Germans or created by ourselves, would be the last of its kind. In his opinion, by the spring of 1935 the last Sibylline book would have been burned. There still remained a short period at the beginning of the year when, if we were ready to look at the problem as a whole, certain and valuable concessions might be wrung from Germany, in return, of course, for some concession on our part. Later in the year the psychological moment would have passed and Germany, if she wished, would be strong enough merely to confront us with a *fait accompli* on which bargaining would be either impossible or next door to impossible. The time within which the situation could be turned to any practical advantage was therefore visibly limited, and this was a proposition which he did not believe that anybody could contest. The Ambassador, he said, had begun the conversation by congratulating our two Governments on their successes at Geneva in regard to the Saar and the Yugoslav dispute, and he had added that when the French and British Governments worked in harmony at Geneva success was assured. That was true, Sir Robert Vansittart said, and he welcomed and applauded as loudly as the Ambassador the successes which had already been attained, but they were successes which touched only a corner of the vast and main problem which still confronted us. That problem was German rearmament and Germany's intentions and future, in which were bound up the whole of European peace. It was to the solution of this problem that he personally hoped the successes already achieved might prove the threshold.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 298.

5. The Ambassador said that he hoped so too, but that he and his country were radically opposed to any solution which might prove to be illusory, and he was inclined to think that this country were too apt to cherish these illusions.

6. Sir Robert Vansittart replied that M. Corbin was now discounting his own optimism with which he had begun the conversation, and, secondly, that he could hardly believe that such things as the return of Germany to the League and her inclusion in the Eastern Pact, which the French Government were pursuing with such pertinacity and ardour, could be accounted illusions. Had the French Government been really inclined to take this view, he would have expected the pursuit to have ceased ere now, but the French Government, on the contrary, were still bent on the chase. We had applauded the idea of the Eastern Pact, and we therefore sympathised with the pursuit, but, again speaking personally, Sir R. Vansittart expected it to prove abortive unless it were brought about as part of a general settlement. If the French Government wished for a little further time to satisfy themselves of this verity, he was personally inclined to think that His Majesty's Government would not wish to force the pace. Sir Robert Vansittart pointed out, however, that the idea of the pact had dragged and lagged for months because there were two Powers, Poland and Germany, who wished to make it drag. This process could not be allowed to continue indefinitely; indeed, the time-limit was clearly a strict one in view of what Sir Robert Vansittart had already said about the obvious time-limit within which it would be possible for practical men to endeavour to drive with Germany as good and hard a bargain as possible before the burning of that last Sibylline book, when we should have no further opportunity of procuring for ourselves the advantages which we both desired. Whether, therefore, M. Corbin was right or not in thinking that any active discussion of our main problem and Europe's main problem could be postponed until some undefined date after the Saar, Sir Robert Vansittart personally felt sure that the consideration of this problem in all its bearings and the achievement of Anglo-French agreement on the subject was really a matter which brooked very little delay. The exact quantity of that delay would no doubt have to be measured by our respective Governments, in view of what M. Laval had already said to your Excellency, for Sir Robert Vansittart emphasised again that he was speaking purely personally and in response to the request which M. Corbin had put to him for his views.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

*Letter from Mr. Newton (Berlin) to Mr. Baxter (Received December 27)*<sup>1</sup>  
[C 8830'247/18]

BERLIN, *December 20, 1934*

My dear Baxter,

Your letter of December 13th about the possibility of the grant of credits or a loan by Germany to Russia.<sup>2</sup>

The Counsellor of the French Embassy told me on December 15th that he had been informed at the Soviet Embassy that the German Government were willing to put RM.200 million at the disposal of the Soviet Government. This would not be in the nature of a loan but a credit for the purchase of goods. Monsieur Arnal knew nothing of any political developments to follow the extension of such a credit, though he thought it would not be surprising if the Germans sought to obtain some political advantage. According to the Soviet Embassy, the Soviet Government had returned no reply to the German offer.

In November we heard a rumour that the Soviet had asked for RM.200 million and that the Germans, to begin with at any rate, had only offered RM.80 million. If the Soviet Embassy can be believed—as to which I would feel considerable hesitation—the fact that the Germans now offer RM.200 million would suggest, firstly, that the German Government were so anxious to please the Soviet Government that they were prepared to concede the latter's figure in full; secondly, that, despite the Soviet statement that the offer came from Germany, Soviet initiative and financial embarrassment also played some part in its genesis.

There is probably something behind these various reports, whether confirmed or unconfirmed, and no doubt the Soviet Government, the French Government, and probably also the German Government, are using them in different ways to further their various political schemes. At the same time I think that it would be rash to dismiss as a mere bogey the possibility of the German Government making serious efforts to improve their relations with the Soviet Government. As was pointed out in our telegram No. 299,<sup>3</sup> there has always been a section of opinion favourable to good relations between Russia and Germany and the Army, in particular, are anxious in regard to the hostility of Russia towards the Nazi State. An officer expressed to Thorne<sup>4</sup> his regrets that the Nazi party held so firmly to the anti-communist plank of their platform. Thorne thinks the Army are afraid that Russia may decide in the near future to consider the Eastern front as their defensive front and turn their attention once more to the West. The Poles share this anxiety, according to our Military Attaché in Warsaw. It must be borne in mind that the Reichswehr have recently regained much of their former influence, and

<sup>1</sup> Date of filing in the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 303, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> No. 220.

<sup>4</sup> Colonel Thorne, H.M. Military Attaché at Berlin.

that a serious attempt to cultivate better relations with Russia might be the sequel. Furthermore, the old régime and most of the more orthodox elements in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and elsewhere, whose influence seems to be on the up grade, would probably like to get on better terms with Russia. If Dr. Goebbels may be taken to represent the more extreme Party elements, even he went out of his way in a recent speech to emphasise that any condemnation of communism in Germany was not intended to imply any criticism of, or interference in, the political system in Russia.

Rawlins<sup>5</sup> learns from his Czech colleague, as well as from local German industrial sources (e.g. manager of Russian section of Siemens) that German Industry, together with some German banks, have been negotiating with the Russians on the subject of a 200 million mark credit, but no definite arrangements have been arrived at. The Germans agreed to grant this credit over four years, but the Russian[s] demand five years. It appears that the Russians are holding out to see whether they cannot obtain better terms from France.

He has also heard that certain French banks are desirous of opening credits for Russia but that the Banque de France is against this and is not keen on lending any money to Russia, unless upon the most definite terms and conditions. The French Minister of Commerce is said to be now in Russia and to have obtained a prolongation of the Franco-Russian Trade Protocol<sup>6</sup> which expires on the 15th January next. Commercial negotiations between France and Russia are to be begun as soon as possible in the New Year.

On the other hand, when Breen<sup>7</sup> last spoke to the Press Attaché of the Soviet Embassy, the latter said that the German commercial houses who traded with Russia were pressing the German Government in the interests of the German unemployment campaign to cease vilifying the Russian political system as it meant a heavy loss of orders. He added that negotiations could not be said to have been initiated by either side for an extension of credits as they never ceased normally. He said nothing about a loan.

It is noteworthy that as reported in our despatch No. 1470<sup>8</sup> of December 18th, Litvinov did not call on Neurath when he passed through the other day.

To sum up. There is evidence here that the question of credits is under discussion, but we have no information that a definite conclusion has been reached. As regards a loan, we know nothing, but the possibility cannot be completely excluded in the future. At the same time it must be admitted that it would be difficult politically (as well as financially just now!) for Hitler to grant a loan to the Soviet. It could scarcely be kept out of the press. Of course there would be no such political objection to credits.

Yours ever

BASIL C. NEWTON

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 267.

<sup>6</sup> Signed on January 11, 1934; see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 137, pp. 851 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Mr. T. B. Breen was Press Officer at H.M. Embassy, Berlin.

<sup>8</sup> Not printed. Sir E. Phipps reported therein that M. Litvinov 'passed through Berlin on December 16th on his way from Geneva'.

*Memorandum by Mr. Perowne<sup>1</sup>*

[C 8800/20/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 21, 1934*

On November 16th (Berlin telegram No. 247 [244] Saving)<sup>2</sup> Sir E. Phipps reported that 'both Reichswehr and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs were disposed to advise the Chancellor—who was prepared to act as they thought fit—to resume disarmament conversations after the Saar plebiscite.' This information, which was very confidential, was based on replies to questions put to a 'German high official'.

On November 27th Baron von Neurath told Sir E. Phipps (Berlin telegram No. 297)<sup>3</sup> that 'he hoped disarmament conversations could be resumed when Saar question is over.'

The German intentions in this matter are thus clear; and Hitler's furious outburst to Sir E. Phipps<sup>4</sup> when the latter gave him warning of the statement regarding German rearmament which His Majesty's Government intended to make in the House of Commons was no doubt occasioned by the alarm he felt at the possibility of the creation of a united British-French-Italian front on the German rearmament question before he was ready himself to take the initiative. According to what Sir E. Phipps has told us, Herr Hitler is now inclined to take a more optimistic view and considers that His Majesty's Government's statement has to some extent legalised the illegal German armaments.<sup>5</sup> The steps taken to disabuse the German Government of this idea do not seem to have produced any marked effect in Berlin, and Sir E. Phipps has reported that meanwhile German pretensions are growing apace. Germany may now claim parity with France or England in the air, and she may demand a fleet 35% the strength of ours.<sup>6</sup> In any case, when it comes to the point 'the figures will be very different from those proposed last spring.' Nevertheless it is the view of Sir E. Phipps<sup>7</sup> that the Reichswehr and the people still wish to see German armaments legalised by means of an international convention, so that they would no longer need to rely on the rather shadowy I.O.U. provided by the 'equality' declaration of December 1932, the Draft Convention of 1933 and the negotiations which followed its presentation. Such a convention would, they think, insure them against any chance of intervention on the part of the 'Versailles Powers'. How long will even this mood last?

The Saar plebiscite is fixed for January 13th, so that there is only a very short period before the Germans are likely to raise the matter during which to attempt to induce first the French and then the Italians to agree upon a common policy.

<sup>1</sup> A note by Mr. Perowne of December 20 said that this memorandum was 'prepared for the information of the Secretary of State for his visit to Paris' and was 'approved by Mr. Sargent and Sir R. Vansittart'.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 242.

<sup>4</sup> No. 217.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 289.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 221.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. No. 208.

If and when the Germans raise the matter in the near future, it will scarcely be possible for the Powers to refuse to discuss it; in any case it will obviously be extremely difficult for His Majesty's Government to persuade public opinion in this country that there is any case for refusing to discuss with Germany a settlement of the armaments problem when the only alternative to such a settlement is an uncontrolled race in armaments. On the other hand, there is all too little sign that the French are ready to discuss the matter at all until they have been satisfied on the security score.

As early as December 3rd, M. Léger informed His Majesty's Minister at Paris<sup>8</sup> that the French Government apprehended that the German Government would interpret His Majesty's Government's declaration in the House of Commons as an invitation to resume negotiations and would seize the opportunity to put forward fresh proposals of an unacceptable character designed to drive a wedge between Great Britain and France. What the French Government feared above all was a repetition of the interminable discussions which had finally come to nought and during which Germany had played off Great Britain, France and Italy one against the other.

On December 13th, M. Laval, in conversation with His Majesty's Ambassador, sketched his plan of campaign as follows:<sup>9</sup> Agreement in principle between France and Italy as to the integrity of the Austrian and Yugoslav frontiers, to be followed by a visit by M. Laval to Rome (provided that, meanwhile, agreement in principle on the purely Franco-Italian questions was reached before the visit), from which will result an Italo-Yugoslav Treaty of Friendship and a multilateral declaration of respect for the Austrian frontiers. *Assuming a successful issue to these plans*, M. Laval then intended to 'get on' with the Eastern Pact and to do all he could to get Germany to become a party to the Austrian declaration and the Pact. If Germany agreed M. Laval would *then, but not before*, be ready to talk of German armaments with His Majesty's Government first of all, then, depending on that discussion, generally. He considered that hitherto the cart had been put before the horse, and that it had been useless to talk of disarmament before the several countries were sure of their security.

Writing on December 17th,<sup>10</sup> Sir G. Clerk warned us that, while he would continue to impress on the French Government the importance which His Majesty's Government attached to speed in the matter, in the French view the acceptance of the Eastern Pact proposals by the Germans and the Poles was still a precondition of the resumption of disarmament discussions. The French would argue that they were not trying to evade the question of German disarmament, but that the Eastern Pact project which we had blessed must first be proved to be definitely hopeless. M. Laval, in his speech in the Chamber on November 30th,<sup>11</sup> had made Germany's accession to the Eastern Pact the acid test of German sincerity.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 243.

<sup>9</sup> See No. 288.

<sup>10</sup> See No. 299.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. No. 241, note 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Note in the original*: 'For account of the present position as regards the Eastern Pact see separate memorandum.' The reference appears to be to Part I of a Foreign Office memorandum

In Sir George Clerk's view, if Germany and Poland were frankly and full to accept the Eastern Pact as recommended by His Majesty's Government, it might be possible to get the French to discuss the legalisation of German rearmament without *much* further delay. In Paris the view had always been held that Germany would feel more disposed to see the advantages of coming into the Pact after the Saar plebiscite had taken place and the intention has been all along not to resume discussions with her<sup>13</sup> until after January 13th.

The French Government are well aware that His Majesty's Government are anxious to start conversations for the legalisation of German rearmament and for Germany's return to the League; but they believe that Great Britain cannot accept any further commitments in connection with guarantees of security in Europe beyond those indicated in the British plan of last spring, and they feel that conversations can only lead to a fresh breakdown and to the early termination of the Franco-British cooperation which is now having such excellent effects in Europe.

For on the question of security France, in Sir G. Clerk's view, has not budged.<sup>14</sup> No French Government could at present sign and survive an agreement for legalising German rearmament without first providing for security. Rather than legalise German rearmament and bind themselves without what they regard as adequate security, the French Government would prefer Germany to continue rearming and France to go on with her present plan for seeking security by means of agreement in the east and centre of Europe. If Germany and Poland refuse to enter the Eastern Pact, France will almost certainly fall back on a more or less veiled bilateral agreement with the Soviets,<sup>15</sup> partly because it appears to them to offer the only alternative form of security, and partly because of the fear that if the Soviet Government were released it might conclude a bilateral agreement with Germany. 'Present French policy, laboured, unsatisfactory and slow as it seems to us, is based on the assumption that British policy in respect of further European commitments has not changed and will not change. If British policy changed, as it changed in the Saar, an entirely new situation would arise. But short

of December 19, not printed, which summarized the Polish Government's views on the Franco-Soviet proposals for an Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee which were communicated to M. Barthou on September 27 (see No. 121, note 2), and outlined the succeeding stages in the exchange of views on the subject up to December 16, as recorded in Nos. 188, 253, 265, and 295.

<sup>13</sup> A marginal note in Sir J. Simon's handwriting at this point reads: 'Not with us?'

<sup>14</sup> Cf. No. 299.

<sup>15</sup> *Note in the original*: 'For account of present position as regards Franco-Soviet agreement see separate memorandum.' The reference appears to be to Part II of the Foreign Office memorandum of December 19 (cf. note 12 above), in which the terms of the Franco-Soviet Protocol of December 5, 1934 (see No. 253, note 4) were summarized and which reproduced the information in No. 253, and stated that the text of the Protocol had been communicated by the French Government to the three Baltic countries and that it was 'understood from the Press that Czechoslovakia adhered on December 11 to the Protocol, the substance of which was made public by M. Laval in the French Senate on December 18'.



of that, I<sup>16</sup> fear we shall have the greatest difficulty in getting the French to alter either their methods or their tempo. After all their policy was evolved as a result of the breakdown in April; we blessed that policy in July; in French eyes it has not yet finally broken down and there has not yet been any fundamental change in the situation such as to justify them in discarding it.'

On Dec. 18th Sir G. Clerk reported (Paris tel. No. 341 S[aving])<sup>17</sup> that 'the importance which H.M. Government attach to an early resumption of disarmament discussions and the expectation that they will shortly urge the French Government to resume conversations on the subject appear to be responsible for a certain amount of discreet ventilation of the question in the French press designed to indicate that France is not absolutely opposed to early discussion of the subject provided that the question of security is faced'.

In a speech on French foreign policy in the Senate on December 18th M. Laval said that France whilst providing for her own security sought a collective system. She was pursuing a policy of peace which was directed against no other country and excluded none. The French Government would never do anything to justify Germany in believing that they intended to practise a policy of isolating her. Franco-German rapprochement within the international framework was an effective guarantee of peace. Let Germany only be persuaded of it and act accordingly and a great step forward towards the necessary reconciliation of the two peoples would have been made. If she said that she wished to take part in the collective pacts contemplated she would give the measure of her sentiment of solidarity.

*Conclusions.* The information summarised above goes to show that France is not yet in what we should consider a wholly realistic frame of mind. She is impressed not so much by our view that it would be prudent for us all to come to an arrangement with Germany while this can yet be had for a price, as by considerations affecting her own security. There is indeed nothing new in all this: the French have always felt that they could not embark on conversations with Germany without some addition to their security; for they fear that such conversations would in any case be bound to lead either to a breakdown or (since they are convinced that H.M. Government cannot accept any further commitments in connexion with guarantees of security in Europe beyond those indicated in the British plan of last spring) to a cessation of that Franco-British cooperation which makes such a valuable impression on Europe in general and on Germany in particular. But since, as stated at the beginning of this memorandum, it is clear that the German Government intend, after the Saar, to invite us all to resume conversations on disarmament, we should perhaps make it clear to the French that H.M. Government will for their part certainly find it difficult to refuse such a proposal, and that we had hoped that before the Germans made it we and the French would have been able to concert a common policy so as to be able ourselves to take the initiative instead of leaving it to the Germans.

<sup>16</sup> i.e. Sir G. Clerk; see No. 299, para. 8.

<sup>17</sup> No. 300.

For the rest it seems to follow, that we should try to persuade the French on the following points:—

(1) It is in French and British interests to reach at the earliest possible date a general settlement with Germany while we are still in a position to take the initiative.

(2) An early meeting between British and French Ministers is essential so that the negotiations for such a settlement with Germany should be based on a previous agreement between Great Britain and France.

(3) The mutual concessions and undertakings necessary to such a settlement with Germany (including of course French requirements as regards 'security') must be negotiated simultaneously so as to form part of one whole.

(4) The ultimate objectives of Great Britain and France should be to bring back Germany to the League and to fix some limit to German rearmament. The French will also wish to secure her adherence to the Eastern Pact.

(5) The price that Great Britain and France should be ready to pay is the application to Germany's armaments of the principle of equality of status.

**No. 309**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Ovey (Brussels)*

*No. 660 [C 8701/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 21, 1934*

Sir,

The Belgian Ambassador called on Sir Robert Vansittart on the 18th December and enquired, in view of his impending return to Brussels, whether Sir Robert Vansittart could tell him anything about the prospects of a resumption of negotiations with a view to arriving at some conclusion in regard to disarmament. The Ambassador said he would quite understand if Sir Robert Vansittart could not or did not wish to reply, but that it would be very helpful to him if he could have some impression to report to M. Hymans, even if it was only a purely personal impression.

2. Sir Robert Vansittart said that a personal impression was certainly the utmost that the Ambassador could expect from him, and that, as an old friend of thirty years' standing, he was quite willing to give him his impression, but that he must tell Baron Cartier at once that it had no official character, and that it was purely an impression which was taking shape in his own mind on returning to work after a long absence. If the Ambassador conveyed anything that Sir Robert Vansittart said to M. Hymans, it must be strictly on that understanding, for any decision of such grave importance would naturally depend on those in higher authority than Sir Robert Vansittart.

3. The Ambassador said that his own idea was that, even if it were found eventually possible to make any further move forward in the matter, such action could not at best be profitably undertaken until after the Saar plebis-

cite. Sir Robert Vansittart replied that that was an idea that he had also heard expressed by some of the Ambassador's colleagues, and that there was very likely some substance in it. In any case, the situation was now an extremely liquid one, though it would have obvious tendencies to solidify. Sir Robert Vansittart then proceeded to talk to Baron Cartier at some length and in some detail on exactly the same lines as he had already spoken to M. Corbin in his interview of the 14th December (a record of which, contained in Foreign Office despatch to Paris, No. 1949<sup>1</sup> of the 20th December, will reach your Excellency under cover of my despatch No. 659), emphasising again that these were only his personal and provisional views.

4. The Belgian Ambassador said that he agreed with every word; that these were, indeed, his own instinctive ideas, and that he had lost and would lose no opportunity of pressing them upon his Government in any private conversations that he might have.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>1</sup> No. 306.

### No. 310

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon*  
(Received December 22, 12.20 p.m.)  
No. 169 Telegraphic [C 8819/247/18]

MOSCOW, December 22, 1934, 1.31 p.m.

I called yesterday on Monsieur Litvinov who has returned from Geneva in good spirits and apparently well pleased with himself in having secured Franco-Soviet protocol regarding Eastern Pact<sup>1</sup> and in having played a considerable role in the labours of the Council of the League. If his position as People's Commissary for Foreign Affairs has been at all shaky as has been recently whispered, owing to non-realization of his projected pacts, it would seem that his seat is now firm in the saddle again.

Soviet press has evidently been ordered to acclaim this protocol in most fulsome terms which indeed are such that one might imagine that the pact itself had actually been concluded. On the subject of the pact Monsieur Litvinov only said that one must simply hope that Poland and Germany would come round. They seemed to be waiting upon one another and he did not suppose Germany would declare herself again until the Saar question was settled. He was pleased to have seen that you had urged upon Polish Ambassador in London the desirability of joining in the pact.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 253, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 265.

*Résumé of Conversation at the Quai d'Orsay between M. Flandin (President of the Council), M. Pierre Laval (Foreign Minister) and M. Léger, representing the French Government, and Sir John Simon, Sir George Clerk, and Mr. Campbell<sup>1</sup>*

[R 7279/5311/67]

PARIS, Saturday, December 22, 1934

M. FLANDIN, who had been the host at lunch, expressed the pleasure which he and M. Laval felt at the opportunity of meeting the British Foreign Secretary again and of discussing with him current questions.

SIR JOHN SIMON reciprocated these sentiments and said that he was charged by the British Cabinet with a message for the French Ministers to the following effect. The Government in London had been closely considering the immediate European situation and they were convinced that it called for definite and prompt action and that things could not be allowed to drift. We had not only stated in Parliament our information as to German re-armament, but we had officially communicated this to Germany. Consequently, if matters were left alone there was a grave danger that Germany would treat our communication as amounting to acquiescence in, and authority for, German re-armament. That was not our intention at all. We therefore earnestly desired an early opportunity for consulting formally and officially with the French Government as to the course now to be taken, for the last thing we should wish would be any weakening in the co-operation which had recently been so fruitful in the matter of the Saar and of the Yugoslav-Hungarian dispute. It was for this reason that we had, as M. Flandin knew, recently made enquiries as to whether he and M. Laval would be prepared to pay us a visit in London.<sup>2</sup> We still thought that this would be most useful and considered that official consultation between the two Governments was urgent.

Sir John said that he appreciated that the view was held in some quarters that it would be better to wait until after the Saar question was settled, but he questioned whether this was a wise course. If the result of the Saar plebiscite and what followed it was a German success, Germany would be less amenable than she was now, and might soon be beyond the reach of negotiation. On the other hand, the spectacle of Anglo-French consultation before the Saar matter was settled might have a very useful moderating effect.

M. FLANDIN interposed to refer sympathetically to our wish to receive French Ministers in London and said that he was in very general accord with the considerations which Sir John had put forward. He would ask the French Foreign Minister to deal with the matter more in detail.

M. LAVAL also expressed sympathetic approval of the line indicated. He emphasised the extremely satisfactory character of recent Anglo-French

<sup>1</sup> This record, communicated by Sir J. Simon, was received in the Foreign Office on December 24.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 287.

co-operation at Geneva and repeated what he had said about it in his recent speech before the Senate.<sup>3</sup> Our readiness to help in the matter of the Saar and in the Yugoslav dispute had made an immense impression, and he was convinced that the continuance of close Anglo-French co-operation was the most important influence for European peace. He then described the immediate objects of his own policy in the realm of foreign affairs, viz., an accord with Italy on the subject of a multi-lateral assurance for safeguarding Austria's frontiers and the promotion of the proposed Eastern Pact in a form which would secure the adhesion both of Poland and of Germany. This part of M. Laval's statement held very closely to the lines of his recent speech in the Senate. M. Laval added that France had recently received assurances from Poland going to show that under certain conditions Poland gave her assent in principle to the continuance of the negotiations.<sup>4</sup>

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that Britain had every sympathy with those objects of French policy (as, indeed, we had already shown), but that we were seriously concerned at what might happen during the lapse of time which would be likely to take place before they were achieved. We appreciated the influence which French public opinion was bound to exert over the conduct of French foreign policy, but there was also British public opinion to be considered. The National Government ought not to be regarded as so firmly established that it could disregard British public opinion; and British Ministers were bound to point out that after their recent *démarche* about the figures of German rearmament, and after the important part which Britain had played in connection with the Saar and the Yugoslav matter, the British Government would certainly be expected to exploit the opportunity and promote agreement about armaments while the conditions were good for the purpose. Looking ahead, he foresaw the possibility, if nothing effective was promptly done, of a grave reproach being addressed to the British Government on the ground that they had failed to make use of the opportunity until Germany's claims had risen yet higher and agreement had become impossible. Already Germany's claims went beyond the formula of April 16th;<sup>5</sup> for example, Germany now had bombing aeroplanes which last April she renounced. Moreover, he invited French Ministers to consider the probable action of Germany as soon as the Saar question was settled. Would not Herr Hitler then come forward himself with proposals to settle the armaments question and invite the rest of us to negotiate with him on the subject? It seemed likely that Herr Hitler would do so. That would give him the initiative and it would be impossible then for the British Government to delay or hesitate, for British public opinion would insist on our own policy in the matter being promptly declared. Therefore it was really essential that there should be a proper consultation between the British and French Governments now, for the last thing that we wanted was to take a public course which had not first been fully discussed with the French Government. Sir

<sup>3</sup> On December 18; see *The Times*, December 19, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 295.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 6 in Cmd. 4559 of 1934; cf. Volume VI, No. 402.

John emphasised that he was not suggesting that any communication should be made to Germany before the Saar question was settled, for the time-table would not admit of it. What he was urging was that there should be an early meeting of French and British Ministers to consider the subject beforehand.

At this point the French Ministers consulted in private and M. Laval then said that the French Government fully appreciated and sympathised with the arguments which had been used. They admitted that the position taken up on April 17th<sup>6</sup> could no longer hold. The French Foreign Minister said that he was ready to go to Rome immediately in order to carry through the outline of an agreement about Austria if only Signor Mussolini could be got to agree in principle to a suitable scheme. This Austrian question, M. Laval said, must come first, both for the reasons of French domestic policy, and in view of their relations with the Little Entente, but the French Government were prepared to agree that the negotiation of the Eastern Pact and other matters should be regarded as postponed to a later date, and should be taken up in combination with, and not before, discussion with Germany of agreement about armaments. Consequently, if we could help him by using our own influence with Mussolini, which he rated very high, for promoting a Franco-Italian agreement about Austria, the French Government would agree here and now that this should be immediately followed by a visit of the two Ministers to London for the purposes of a Conference before the date of the Saar plebiscite.

SIR JOHN SIMON thanked M. Laval warmly for the advance he had made, which recognised the main point which Sir John had come to emphasise, viz., the urgency of prompt consultation between British and French Ministers. But, in view of the imminence of the Saar plebiscite, the practical question of a time-table now presented itself. How soon did M. Laval think he could go to Rome? How long did he expect to be there? If all went well, what was the sort of date when M. Flandin and he could come to London? As for any influence which the British Government could exercise in Rome to promote an agreement about Austria, this was a thing which the Government in London would certainly be willing to do their best about, it being always understood that what was proposed did not involve any fresh commitment for the United Kingdom. (M. Flandin had to leave about this point for the debate on the wheat scheme, which was just resuming. He said that M. Laval had his full authority and support in everything that he was saying.)

M. LAVAL repeated that he was ready to start for Rome immediately, and that, as regards time-table, he would be quite ready to get back in order to accompany M. Flandin to London about January 7th or 8th bearing in mind that the quarterly meeting of the Council of the League would begin at Geneva about the 11th.

Some discussion then ensued on two points:

- (1) as to the extent of the programme at the forthcoming London meeting, and

<sup>6</sup> See No. 8 in Cmd. 4559; cf. Volume VI, No. 395, enclosure.

(2) as to the nature of the guarantee as regards Austria which France wished to promote, and the best line for the United Kingdom to take in endeavouring to influence Mussolini to accept it.

As to (1) it was agreed that the discussions in London would not be solely about German re-armament but that associated questions would also have to be thoroughly discussed; in fact, the object would be to survey the whole European field. As for (2) M. Laval said that Signor Mussolini had originally declared himself to the Comte Chambrun as favourable to the idea of a multilateral guarantee including Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. But Signor Mussolini had since withdrawn from that position. M. Laval complained that Italy changed its point of view on this matter continually.

M. LAVAL said that France was quite prepared to see Roumania left out of the original arrangement. The French plan essentially involved a guarantee by the limitrophe States, but there might be a door left open by which others, e.g., Roumania, could afterwards accede. In reply to a question from Sir John Simon, he said that by a guarantee he meant that the frontiers of Austria would be secured, if necessary by force of arms, against anyone who sought to interfere with them.

MR. CAMPBELL, who had recently returned from Rome, pointed out that the view was strongly held there that so extensive a guarantee by the limitrophe States would only serve to reinforce Nazi influence in Austria. It was held in Italy that if Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia were included as guarantors, Austria would react by becoming more German than ever.

M. LAVAL did not seem to think that this objection was so strong, but the question of the exact form of the guarantee was not further pursued in the conversation.

Finally, Sir John raised the question whether it was correct to assume that in this particular matter London could greatly influence Rome. This was not like the case of the Saar, where we could press Italy to provide a contingent because we were providing one ourselves. Here we should only be offering advice without ourselves making any contribution. M. Laval expressed with the utmost confidence the view that our own advice in this matter would be effective and practically decisive. Without necessarily accepting this view Sir John said that we would certainly lend to France what aid we could, and added that it seemed to him that the most effective argument to address to Signor Mussolini would be on the following lines:—once the Saar question is out of the way, Germany, encouraged by this success, is likely to turn elsewhere, and is it not towards Austria that she will turn? It is therefore very desirable to provide in advance against the dangerous situation that might arise. This could best be done by rapidly securing a fresh multilateral declaration in support of Austrian integrity. Moreover, it might be pointed out to Signor Mussolini that the United Kingdom Government intended to follow up its recent action in connexion with German armaments, in consultation with France and Italy, at the earliest possible moment with the object of getting Germany back to Geneva and arriving at an agreement about disarmament before the situation hardened, as it certainly would, if

things were allowed to drift.<sup>7</sup> M. Laval entirely agreed that this was the most effective line to take and the interview ended with expressions of mutual satisfaction as to its usefulness, and an agreement as to the terms of a communiqué<sup>8</sup> of the most exiguous and unenlightening character.

<sup>7</sup> A message in these terms was sent on December 22 to Signor Mussolini by Sir J. Simon in Paris telegram No. 3 to Rome, repeated to the Foreign Office on December 23 as Paris telegram No. 140.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *The Times*, December 24, p. 10.

## No. 312

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 1985 [C 8796/20/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 28, 1934*

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 1949<sup>1</sup> of December 20th, I have to inform Your Excellency that the French Ambassador called on Sir Robert Vansittart on December 20th before leaving for Paris for Christmas.

2. M. Corbin asked if Sir Robert Vansittart had anything fresh to say to him on the subject of disarmament. Sir Robert Vansittart replied that he had nothing at present to add to what he had already given the Ambassador as his personal ideas at the time of their last conversation.

3. M. Corbin seemed to adhere to the view, which he had then expressed, that it would be difficult to make any progress until after the Saar plebiscite. He now, however, added a further consideration. He thought that progress would be greatly promoted if meanwhile it had proved possible to come to, or at least to approach, an agreement between Italy and France.

4. Sir Robert Vansittart said that, as the Ambassador knew, no one would welcome this more than he. Indeed, M. Corbin knew that in that Sir Robert Vansittart could do more than speak personally, for it would be exceedingly welcome to His Majesty's Government. Sir Robert Vansittart was, therefore, delighted to hear M. Corbin utter such sentiments, but, on his own showing, the French and Italian Governments would have to move quickly to keep even approximately within the time-table hinted at by the Ambassador. Sir Robert Vansittart had watched these Franco-Italian negotiations advance and retire a good many years now. He entirely agreed with M. Corbin that the French hand would be much strengthened by their conclusion, and he hoped therefore, after what the Ambassador said, that they might be going to force their own hands, or anyhow the pace. M. Corbin at once expressed some doubt as to whether anything could be achieved before the plebiscite in the Saar, but Sir Robert Vansittart replied that he hoped the Ambassador would not cool off in his own suggestion because the more Sir Robert Vansittart thought of it the more he considered it a wise one.

<sup>1</sup> No. 306.



5. In speaking as he did, M. Corbin had obviously in mind the impression that would be produced in Germany, and considered that the conclusion of a Franco-Italian agreement would make the German Government more amenable vis-à-vis the French Government.

6. Sir Robert Vansittart, for his part, had another consideration in mind, although of course he did not put it that way to M. Corbin. He was reflecting that the conclusion of a Franco-Italian agreement would make the French Government more amenable to the views of His Majesty's Government, seeing that a long step would then have been taken on the road towards the achievement of French security.

I am, &c.,  
(for the Secretary of State)  
C. W. BAXTER

### No. 313

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received December 31)*

*No. 281 Saving: Telegraphic [C 8930/20/18]*

BERLIN, December 29, 1934

My telegram No. 277 (Saving)<sup>1</sup> of December 20th.

The Belgian Minister has returned rather crestfallen from his Brussels meeting, having found his Government unexpectedly hostile to an armaments Convention. He tells me that they now maintain, like MM. Tardieu and Herriot, that it is useless to sign a Convention that would bind all of us, but would not bind the treacherous Germans: moreover, in an armaments race we are sure to win for we can outbuild Germany for financial reasons.

Count Kerchove does not, however, think that the Belgian Government will necessarily adhere inflexibly to these views, but might well abandon them under pressure by His Majesty's Government.

Meanwhile, German pretensions in the rearmament sphere seem to be growing for Count Kerchove was told recently by a high official of the Wilhelmstrasse that Germany would no longer be content with 25%<sup>2</sup> of her neighbours' air forces, but would demand 25% of the air-forces of her neighbours *and* of Russia, including the latter's military air-craft in the Far East.

Repeated to Brussels No. 4 (Saving).

<sup>1</sup> No. 305.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 289, note 1. A minute of January 3, 1935, by Mr. Baxter read: 'This is the first I have heard of 25%. It is probably a mistake.'

No. 314

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 6, 8.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 5 Saving: Telegraphic [C 133/1/18]*

BERLIN, January 4, 1935

Herr Hitler suffers from occasional fits of nervousness about the Saar figures. He has been in touch with ex 'Marxist' circles here with the idea of enlisting their help in the Saar campaign. Herr Severing, the former Prussian Minister of the Interior,<sup>1</sup> has made a helpful statement to the press urging Saarlanders to vote for Germany and rejection of alternatives. Other leaders insisted on unsuitable formulae and could not be exploited.

This is why last evening Herr Hitler staged spectacular gathering<sup>2</sup> of Local Leaders, Heads of Administration, Generals and Ministers of the Reich etc. to emphasise the solidarity of the government and Nazi party and so impress the Saar voters (see my despatch No. 10 of today).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From 1928 to 1930.

<sup>2</sup> In the State Opera House in Berlin.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed. For a telegraphic account of the gathering, see No. 315.

No. 315

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 6, 10 a.m.)*  
*No. 6 Saving: Telegraphic [C 134/134/18]*

BERLIN, January 4, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

I learn confidentially that Herr Hitler took the opportunity to sound his political bosses and local leaders on subject of foreign policy. He was told that the country was quite content to accept any decision of the government as it realised that Germany could pursue no vigorous policy until her military forces were re-established. Everything connected with foreign policy would therefore have to be subordinated to that aim and, just as Poland had been given lease of Corridor for ten years,<sup>2</sup> the country would understand Herr Hitler's motives, if he had to grant similar leases elsewhere.

On the other hand dissatisfaction with employment position and standard of living was stated to be fairly general amongst the factory population.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 314.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the German-Polish Declaration of Non-Aggression of January 26, 1934; cf. No. 1, note 5.

<sup>3</sup> In a private letter of January 10 Mr. Sargent asked Sir E. Phipps for his comments on 'the real significance of the occasion'. Replying on January 15 the Ambassador gave, in the words of Mr. Perowne, 'a homily on the difficulty of getting secret or confidential information in the Germany of today'. Sir E. Phipps then reiterated the view 'that the primary object of the meeting was to stage a demonstration of solidarity in order, on the eve of the plebiscite, to impress opinion in the Saar and at the same time impress foreign countries'. He

also remarked: 'Is it that you think that it was scarcely worth while to summon this large conclave "merely to impress" the Saar? If so, I am afraid that I must have failed to convey to you the importance which Hitler attaches to obtaining a substantial majority for Germany.'

## No. 316

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received January 7, 5.40 p.m.)*

*No. 3 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 161/1/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, January 7, 1935

Addressed to Rome No. 4.

Following from Secretary of State:<sup>1</sup>

Germany is still a member of the League and still a permanent member of the Council. It seems to me very desirable that she should be invited to be present as a council member for discussion and decision which will follow the Saar plebiscite. It could be made plain that her attendance on this occasion and for this purpose was entirely without prejudice to her notice given in October 1933<sup>2</sup> and to her announced intention to carry out that notice. The advantage of her presence for the purpose of the Saar business is obvious. But even if she rejected the suggestion I think there would be considerable advantage in having made it and in making it publicly known that it had been made. For this is prescribed and constitutional method for making Germany's view and influence felt. Any irregular protest or demonstration would therefore lose all possible justification or sympathy. And on the other hand the spectacle at this moment of a reunion at Geneva even for this limited and specific purpose would have an immense effect. Precedent of January 1934 when Germany was asked to take part and refused<sup>3</sup> is not conclusive for now the fate of territory is to be determined.

2. Please see Signor Mussolini and Monsieur Laval<sup>4</sup> at once and urge above considerations strongly upon them. I should be opposed to waiting for meeting of the Council<sup>5</sup> before taking action and think best course is for a joint démarche to be made by the three Powers at once. Failing this I might make an enquiry through Sir E. Phipps in regard to which I should much appreciate support of French and Italian Ambassadors at Berlin.

3. I shall get back to London tonight and would like an immediate reply sent to me there.

Repeated to Berlin and Foreign Office.

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Simon was passing through Paris on his way home from the south of France.

<sup>2</sup> On October 14, 1933; cf. Volume V, No. 454.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume VI, Nos. 218, 229, 240, and 242.

<sup>4</sup> M. Laval had arrived in Rome on January 4 for discussions which preceded the signing of the Franco-Italian Pact of January 7; cf. No. 328 below.

<sup>5</sup> The 84th session of the Council of the League of Nations was to open in Geneva on January 11, 1935.

No. 317

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 7, 7.10 p.m.)*

*No. 4 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 162/1/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, January 7, 1935

I have just seen Monsieur Flandin and explained your suggestion to him.<sup>1</sup> At first he was somewhat reserved. He admitted that Germany's presence could only be of advantage while the Council was discussing matters arising out of the plebiscite but feared that if she declined the invitation her refusal would constitute a rebuff to the League. I think I more or less disposed of his qualms on that score. As a minor point he thought invitation should not be despatched without at least the knowledge of the other members of the Council.

As time went on and he had more time for reflection he became more friendly to the suggestion and finally gave me to understand that he would be agreeable to its adoption subject to any considerations which had not occurred to him but might occur to Monsieur Laval. He appreciated your desire for an early answer and undertook to telephone at once to Monsieur Laval so that if he approved the idea he might be able to give his answer to Sir E. Drummond forthwith.

Monsieur Flandin asked me to tell you that he much appreciated your courtesy in telling him of the communication made to Monsieur Laval while absent from France.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 316.

No. 318

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 8, 6.15 a.m.)*

*No. 26 Telegraphic [C 168/1/18]*

ROME, January 8, 1935, 1.35 a.m.

I placed before Signor Mussolini the arguments contained in your telegram No. 4 from Paris,<sup>1</sup> concluding with the proposal for an immediate joint démarche by the three Powers. Signor Mussolini said that he appreciated the force of the argument but did not think such a démarche would be wise. Germany was showing at the present time certain conciliatory dispositions and he thought that anything which might lead to renewed tension should be avoided. Might it not therefore be better, he enquired, to make a (? semi)<sup>2</sup> and unofficial enquiry as to whether Germany would be prepared to participate at the meeting of the Council in question. I said that although I had not mentioned it before, this was an alternative you had equally in mind but if such enquiries were made through Sir E. Phipps, could he say

<sup>1</sup> See No. 316.

<sup>2</sup> The text is here uncertain.

that it was with the support of his Italian and French colleagues? Signor Mussolini said that he thought that there was no difficulty about this. He pointed out that even if the enquiry was unofficial we could, in case of need, ultimately state that the suggestion had been put forward but that it had been turned down by Germany thus obtaining the same results as if a joint démarche had been made. Signor Mussolini did not like the idea of the three Powers exposing themselves to a formal rebuff. I observed that I thought the course he suggested would be quite satisfactory to His Majesty's Government.

As I could not see Monsieur Laval personally since he was attending a gala performance at the Opera, I conveyed to him your views and Signor Mussolini's preference through the French Ambassador who promised that I should have an answer before the Minister for Foreign Affairs leaves tomorrow.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

### No. 319

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 8, 12 noon)*

*No. 27 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 181/1/18]*

ROME, January 8, 1935

My telegram No. 26.<sup>1</sup>

Monsieur Laval asked French Ambassador to inform me that while he was grateful for the proposal I had conveyed to him he required some little time for reflection and that as soon as he reached Paris tomorrow he would give an answer through Sir George Clerk.

The Ambassador added that his personal impression was that Monsieur Laval would prefer to await result of actual plebiscite before approaching German Government.

Repeated to Paris No. 6 and Berlin No. 7 by Foreign Office.

<sup>1</sup> No. 318.

### No. 320

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 8, 9.5 p.m.)*

*No. 28 Telegraphic [C 184/1/18]*

ROME, January 8, 1935, 8 p.m.

My telegram No. 27.<sup>1</sup>

French Ambassador, whom I have again seen, has personal impression that Monsieur Laval's diffidence arises from a fear that such a démarche if made now in Berlin might be thought to show the belief of the Great Powers that the Saar voting would assuredly be in Germany's favour and may therefore

<sup>1</sup> No. 319.

have a certain influence on the voting itself. There may also be some misunderstanding as Monsieur Laval may have thought suggestion was that Germany should be pressed to attend Council meeting from its opening and not solely after results of plebiscite were known.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

## No. 321

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 7 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 181/1/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 8, 1935, 9 p.m.*

Rome telegrams No. 26<sup>1</sup> and No. 27.<sup>2</sup>

You should inform French Government that Signor Mussolini has agreed to action on the lines of my original second alternative suggestion in paragraph 2 of my telegram No. 4 to Rome<sup>3</sup> viz., that an enquiry should be addressed to the German Government by Sir E. Phipps, who could explain that it had the support of his French and Italian colleagues. It is important that M. Laval should be informed of this at once on his arrival in Paris.

2. I would strongly deprecate any proposal to await the result of the Plebiscite before approaching the German Government. To take action only after the result of the Plebiscite had become known would lead German Government to believe that action was inspired by the actual result of the voting. Action, if it is to be taken at all, must be taken at once; delay would defeat the purpose we have in view of associating Germany from the outset with the Council's task of solving the Saar problem.

3. As you are aware, I consider it quite likely that the German Government will reject the suggestion, but I see great advantage in being able to make it known publicly that such a suggestion has been made. I do not agree that rejection by Germany could be a rebuff. I do not, in fact, propose that enquiry should take the form of a formal invitation to the German Government, but that Sir E. Phipps should merely enquire whether on this very exceptional occasion the German Government are going to be represented on the Council, explaining that if so their representative will be welcomed, and that we would of course understand that his presence in such exceptional circumstances must not be taken as affecting in any way Germany's notice of withdrawal given in October 1933, or the operation of that notice two years after its date.

4. I should greatly appreciate a very prompt reply and hope that M. Laval will authorise me to tell Sir E. Phipps that he may make this informal enquiry with the French Government's support.

Repeated to Rome No. 18, Berlin No. 8.

<sup>1</sup> No. 318.

<sup>2</sup> No. 319.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 316.

No. 322

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 9, 1.10 p.m.)*  
*No. 6 Telegraphic [C 196/55/18]*

BERLIN, *January 9, 1935, 12.45 p.m.*

I learn very privately that Signor Mussolini has been talking frankly to Hassel[1]<sup>1</sup> asserting inter alia that France was responsible for breakdown of disarmament discussions.<sup>2</sup> He asked Hassel[1] whether Germany was prepared to resume on basis of Italian draft<sup>3</sup> and Hassel[1] replied that, subject to correction from Berlin which he thought unlikely, this was the case.

Repeated to Paris and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Herr Ulrich von Hassell was German Ambassador in Italy.

<sup>2</sup> A reference presumably to the French note of April 17, 1934; cf. No. 311, note 6.

<sup>3</sup> The Italian memorandum on disarmament on January 31, 1934, which included the suggested limitation of the military expenditure and land warfare material of the Powers not bound by the peace treaties to their existing levels, is printed in Cmd. 4512 of 1934; cf. Volume VI, Nos. 161 and 239.

No. 323

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*  
*No. 9 Telegraphic [C 181/1/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 9, 1935, 8 p.m.*

My telegram No. 7 to Paris.<sup>1</sup>

You should now address the German Government as proposed, making it clear that your informal enquiry is made with the knowledge and approval of the French and Italian Governments. You should inform your French and Italian colleagues beforehand.

2. You may remind German Government that previous steps taken in reference to the Saar plebiscite have in fact been taken with German assent, but the method of indirect consultation necessarily involves delay and the discussions at the forthcoming meeting will be of incomparably greater importance. They will settle the whole future fate of the territory. Germany's participation in these discussions as a Council member will be most valuable to all concerned, and indeed such participation is Germany's natural way to make her views and influence felt and to accelerate the action finally taken. You should emphasize that Germany's attendance on this exceptional occasion would be entirely without prejudice to her notice of October 1933 regarding her intention to withdraw from the League or to the operation of that notice in October 1935.

3. French Ministry for Foreign Affairs have explained to His Majesty's Embassy at Paris that, being uncertain of Italian Government's views, they have made further enquiries at Rome. They are now prepared to agree to

<sup>1</sup> No. 321.

action indicated in paragraph 1 above. They understand, however, that Italian Government maintain strongly that, if German answer to your unofficial sounding is favourable, any official invitation to be issued by the three Governments jointly should only be made after the result of the plebiscite voting is known.

Repeated to Paris No. 8 and Rome No. 20.

## No. 324

*Record by Sir J. Simon of a conversation with Herr von Hoesch*

[C 277/1/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 9, 1935*

Herr von Hoesch asked to see me this evening about the Saar.<sup>1</sup> He emphasised the importance of a quick decision by the Council as to the fate of the territory as soon as possible after the result of the plebiscite was known. He referred to an agreement which he said had been entered into between the French and German representatives in connection with the work of Baron Aloisi's Committee to the effect that both parties agreed on the importance of the interval between the decision and the carrying of it into effect being as short as possible. I said that though I did not know of any special agreement between France and Germany, I knew that the Aloisi Committee had itself recommended<sup>2</sup> that the interval should be as short as possible, but had gone on to say that for technical and financial reasons a month would be required as a minimum between the decision of the Council and any consequential transfer, if indeed the decision of the Council was in favour of transfer. The German Ambassador agreed and explained that his present visit was for the purpose of urging that the minimum should be the maximum.

2. I said that it would be necessary to await the result of the plebiscite and the meeting of the Council but that I personally agreed that the interval should be as short as possible and that it was desirable, if possible, to fix in advance the precise date when any transfer ought to take place. There was, however, a good deal, I expected, which had to be arranged if a transfer was decided on—for example the customs system had to be altered and there were properties and responsibilities to hand over. The Ambassador thought that these matters should not take very long. I observed that they would certainly not take long if Germany was present at the Council meeting when they had to be arranged. But they would inevitably take longer in her absence.<sup>3</sup>

J. S.

<sup>1</sup> The German Ambassador had just received a copy of Baron von Neurath's instructions of January 7 to the German Ambassador in Rome regarding the views of the German Government on the procedure to be followed by Baron Aloisi's committee following the anticipated German victory in the plebiscite. See *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 414.

<sup>2</sup> See paragraph 7 of the final report; cf. No. 255, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> The substance of this record was sent to Sir E. Phipps in Foreign Office despatch No. 49 of January 11, not printed.



No. 325

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 10, 1.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 7 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 259/1/18]*

BERLIN, January 10, 1935

Your telegram No. 9.<sup>1</sup>

I have just made informal verbal enquiry of Baron von Neurath in the sense of paragraph 2 of above making it clear that enquiry was made with the knowledge and approval of French and Italian Governments.

His Excellency is leaving tonight for Berchtesgaden where he is spending a few days with the Chancellor who himself does not contemplate returning to Berlin until January 20th. He could not therefore give me any reply but his first reaction was not favourable. He thinks it unlikely that any questions in this connexion will require presence of anyone from here except German expert who is already at Geneva or about to arrive there. I of course contested this again pointing out that the whole future fate of territory would be settled and settled much more quickly and satisfactorily if a German member of the Council were present. Moreover I remarked that 'les absents ont toujours tort'. I further urged excellent effect his presence would produce and reiterated assurance that it would be without any prejudice to Germany's notice to quit or to operation of that notice in October. Finally I begged Baron von Neurath to give the matter his earnest consideration and to put clearly before the Chancellor arguments advanced by me. This he promised to do but will probably not be able to reply definitely until Sunday.<sup>2</sup>

His Excellency further expressed fear less [?lest] other questions besides those connected with the Saar might arise at the Council meeting in question. I assured him this would certainly not be the case.

Repeated to Paris, Rome and Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> No. 323.      <sup>2</sup> January 13.

No. 326

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 10, 6.25 p.m.)*  
*No. 11 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 262/1/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, January 10, 1935, 6.25 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Baron von Neurath told me that Daventry wireless station has leaked and he therefore rang up the Chancellor whose reply is that Germany cannot be present as member of the Council but experts will be available. His Excellency has so informed the press.

<sup>1</sup> Telegram No. 10 of even date, not printed, referred to reports in German newspapers, said to have been telephoned from Paris, that Sir E. Phipps had been instructed to request the German Government to attend the forthcoming meeting of the League Council.

He hears from Geneva that the Council to decide about the Saar will only meet in February but he urgently begs it may meet if possible next week (I said it was my impression it would). He says economic situation will be very difficult in the Saar unless the Council declare directly after the plebiscite two questions:

1. To whom is the Saar to go.
  2. On what date.
- Repeated to Paris, Rome and Geneva.

### No. 327

*Viscount Chilton (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 10, 6.40 p.m.)*  
*Nos. 5 and 6 Telegraphic [R 289/1/67]*

MOSCOW, *January 10, 1935, 7.40 p.m.*

Monsieur Litvinov who left for Geneva the day before yesterday was much perturbed about Franco-Italian proposal for Central European agreement<sup>1</sup> and anxious as to its scope and possible effect upon Russia's position. No doubt he will remind Monsieur Laval of recent protocol which he signed with him<sup>2</sup> agreeing to enter into no negotiations contrary to those for Eastern pact.

I gather from Italian Ambassador that Litvinov when informed by him and by French Ambassador of this scheme, showed anxiety and annoyance on following grounds.

1. If all states asked to join should agree then Russia would be left as the only big Power in Europe outside it; and if Great Britain were to adhere also the whole pact would be in the nature of an anti-Soviet bloc! (French Ambassador however seems to have observed that it might be open to Russia to join also if invited).

2. If Poland and Germany came in this would seriously affect conclusion of Eastern guarantee pact, chances of which might be reduced to nothing.

3. Whereas Eastern pact would be one of mutual assistance Central European agreement seemed to have no such character.

4. If Germany joins she would expect immediate concessions in regard to her armament claims.

On this last point however Litvinov seemed to have added that England had promised not to enter into further consideration of these German claims until after conclusion of Eastern pact with Germany as a signatory. I told Italian Ambassador that I doubted correctness of this (it is not the impression I obtained from reading your conversation with French Minister recorded in Paris telegram No. 140).<sup>3</sup>

I think probably Litvinov's greatest anxiety is possibility of losing France definitely. At Geneva therefore he will strike while the iron is still hot and will maintain that Eastern pact of mutual assistance is more important than

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 335 below.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 253, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 311, note 7.

protocol about Austria which is merely a declaration. He may also try to persuade French to get from His Majesty's Government some undertaking not to bring up question of German armaments until after signature of Eastern pact.

Press opinion here is roughly as follows: that without serious guarantees and without decision to support them by action peace cannot be maintained. Agreement is a stage on the way to understanding with Germany at which England has been aiming for some time past. It would mean legalisation of German armaments. Then Germany could return to the League and England and Italy once more could attempt to organise a concert of Great Powers in Western Europe. Further, Germany may seek to capture from within not only Austria but Hungary and even some of the Little Entente, whereas in the case of Yugoslavia and partly of Roumania Germany has lately very much strengthened her position. In fact Hitler may see in Rome consultative pact a convenient opportunity of securing by peaceful means what he failed to achieve by open aggression.

Repeated to Geneva.

No. 328

*Letter from Mr. Harvey (Paris) to the Foreign Office*

[C 269/55/18]

*Very confidential*

PARIS, January 10, 1935

Dear Department,<sup>1</sup>

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs having told us this morning that a communication was being made by M. Corbin to you to-day on the subject of the Franco-Italian disarmament protocol concluded at Rome,<sup>2</sup> we asked them to let us have a copy for the information of the Secretary of State who would have already left London.<sup>3</sup> We enclose a copy of the text which they have given us. Copies have been given by us to the Secretary of State and Eden.

Yours ever,

OLIVER HARVEY

ENCLOSURE IN No. 328

*Copie.*

*Protocole sur les armements*

(Concluded between M. Laval and Signor Mussolini at Rome and communicated *very confidentially* by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the information of the Secretary of State.)

<sup>1</sup> This letter was addressed to the Western Department of the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> A note of January 11 on the file recorded that a copy of the text of this Protocol was communicated on that day to Sir R. Vansittart by the French Ambassador.

<sup>3</sup> Sir J. Simon, accompanied by Mr. Eden, left London on January 10 to attend the opening meeting of the 84th session of the Council of the League of Nations in Geneva on January 11.

Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de la République française et le Chef du Gouvernement italien se déclarent d'accord pour estimer que l'Allemagne, non plus qu'aucune autre Puissance dont le statut d'armement a été défini par traité, ne peut modifier par voie unilatérale ses obligations en matière d'armement, le principe de l'égalité des droits tel qu'il est défini par la Déclaration du 11 Décembre 1932<sup>4</sup> demeurant par ailleurs intact. En conséquence, les deux Gouvernements conviennent de procéder de la manière suivante:

Au cas où l'Allemagne voudrait se libérer unilatéralement du traité en se réservant une complète liberté d'armements, les deux Gouvernements, animés du désir de procéder d'un commun accord, se concerteront sur l'attitude à adopter.

Au cas où les circonstances permettraient une reprise des négociations internationales en vue de la conclusion d'une convention générale de limitation des armements les deux Gouvernements associeront leurs efforts pour que les chiffres de limitation qui seront inscrits dans la convention assurent aux deux Pays, par rapport à l'Allemagne, les avantages qui seraient justifiés pour chacun d'eux.<sup>5</sup>

Fait en double exemplaire à Rome le 7 Janvier 1935.

Suivent les signatures.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume IV, No. 220, enclosure.

<sup>5</sup> On January 8 an official Italian summary of the agreements signed in Rome on January 7 was issued (see *Documents on International Affairs 1935*, vol. i, pp. 22-4). This communiqué was printed in the *Temps* of January 10. In a minute of January 24 Mr. Sargent wrote: 'It is to be noted that in the official communiqué no reference was made to the third paragraph of this protocol. Signor Vitetti [Italian Chargé d'Affaires at London] explained to me that he doubted whether the protocol would ever be published textually, since the third paragraph would naturally give offence to the Germans and might thus render subsequent negotiations more difficult.' Cf. also *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 417, and No. 335 below, note 7.

## No. 329

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 11, 9.15 p.m.)*  
*No. 15 Telegraphic [C 281/1/18]*

*Very confidential*

BERLIN, *January 11, 1935, 8.30 p.m.*

I hear privately that German Government were greatly surprised when I made my enquiry regarding their return to the League Council for the Saar decision.

Herr von Hoesch reported that he had made it clear to Mr. Sargent in a conversation (about which I have not been informed) that an enquiry could only lead to a refusal. My enquiry coming on top of this conversation made them suspicious and strengthened their determination to refuse.<sup>1</sup>

Repeated to Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> In a letter of January 14 to Sir E. Phipps, Mr. Sargent referred to Foreign Office despatch No. 48 of January 11 (No. 332 below) which, he said, was being sent to Berlin by bag

on the 14th. He remarked that as he had made no enquiry of Herr von Hoesch it was 'quite out of the question that he should have made it clear, as he seems to have reported, that such an enquiry would only lead to a refusal'. Mr. Sargent added that Sir J. Simon had decided to send his telegram No. 9 (No. 323) after seeing the record of Mr. Sargent's conversation on the 9th and after a talk with Herr von Hoesch himself (see No. 324).

### No. 330

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 12)*

*No. 8 Saving: Telegraphic [C 283/1/18]*

PARIS, January 11, 1935

The chief topic in the French press this morning is British *démarche* in Berlin inviting Germany to attend forthcoming Council on Saar.

2. Certain papers consider it an extremely clever move, for the Reich puts itself in the wrong by refusing and cannot afterwards make capital out of any decision having been taken in her absence.

3. Others, less numerous, regard it as a mistake since it was courting an inevitable refusal and gave Germany the impression that she was being run after.

Repeated to Geneva No. 1 by telephone.

### No. 331

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received January 13)*

*No. 2 L.N. Saving: Telegraphic [C 308/55/18]*

GENEVA, January 11, 1935

Following from Secretary of State:

M. Massigli asked to see Mr. Eden this evening for a frank and confidential conversation on the future course of the disarmament negotiations. M. Massigli stated that he was himself somewhat befogged as to the course to be pursued. From information at the disposal of the French Government it was clear that Germany had already rearmed far beyond the levels proposed by Herr Hitler to Mr. Eden last spring. He was afraid that if conversations were once entered upon with the German Government, the latter's demands would be so large as to make agreement impossible.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden admitted that the German demands might be expected to exceed those that Herr Hitler had made to him last spring, but if matters were allowed to drift, would not the position be still worse a year hence? If it was still possible to secure an agreement which brought a measure of appeasement to Europe, while limiting the extent of German rearmament, surely this was highly desirable? M. Massigli agreed at once and said that he fully appreciated the force of the reasoning which had led His Majesty's Government to take the view expressed by me

<sup>1</sup> A marginal note by Sir R. Vansittart here reads: 'This is of course also my fear. R.V.'

in Paris before Christmas;<sup>2</sup> but M. Massigli was himself very sceptical as to the practical possibility of securing an agreement with Germany about armaments. It was not, he begged Mr. Eden to believe, the mere question of France being reluctant to legalist [? legalise] German illegalities but far more the fear that Germany would open her mouth so wide that agreement would be impossible and the outlook for Europe be worsened in consequence.<sup>3</sup>

M. Massigli then went on to speak of the technical but formidable difficulties in the way of negotiation of a disarmament convention. M. Massigli himself could see very little chance of drawing up and agreeing to an elaborate document such as the British Draft Convention<sup>4</sup> at this time. The attitude of Japan<sup>5</sup> alone made this virtually impossible. Was there any other method? It had occurred to M. Massigli that perhaps the Committee on Trade in and Manufacture of Arms might offer a solution. Might this Committee not extend its labour to the extent of drawing up the suggested requirements in certain arms of a number of Powers for the next few years? All arms could not be covered in this way but heavy artillery, the manufacture of which could be checked by supervision, and aeroplanes, might usefully be so treated.<sup>6</sup> M. Massigli did not press this suggestion, but merely put it forward as one method of securing some limitation of Germany's armaments without the complexities of a convention of ninety clauses.

It was clear from the nature of M. Massigli's observations that the French Government anticipated that any agreement reached about armaments would include supervision and guarantees of execution though there was no discussion on either of these subjects.

Mr. Eden mentioned that one reason which impressed him with the need for an early understanding between the French Government and His Majesty's Government on these matters was the likelihood that Herr Hitler would himself raise the question once the Saar plebiscite was over. M. Massigli replied that from information at the disposal of the French Government they were by no means so sure that the German Government were likely to do this. He added that if the conversations in London were to be the success which both countries would wish, much preliminary work would no

<sup>2</sup> See No. 311.

<sup>3</sup> A marginal comment by Sir R. Vansittart here reads: 'I do not see that the outlook for Europe can be worse if Germany is quite unreasonable. On the contrary there will be advantages in having tried, even if the result is only to prove that Germany will agree to nothing in reason or compatible with the general safety. Everybody will at least know then where they are.'

<sup>4</sup> A reference to the Draft Convention submitted by the United Kingdom delegates to the General Commission of the Disarmament Conference on March 16, 1933; cf. No. 48, note 4.

<sup>5</sup> A reference presumably to the denunciation by the Japanese Government on December 31, 1934, of the Five-Power Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament of February 6, 1922 (No. 1 in Cmd. 1627 of 1922).

<sup>6</sup> Mr. R. C. S. Stevenson remarked on this suggestion, in a minute of January 14, that this committee 'has a special mandate from the Bureau of the Disarmament Conf[erence] which does not include such a task. Moreover the membership of the Committee is restricted'.

doubt be necessary. Certainly the French Ministers had not yet devoted the time to it that the importance of the subject demanded, and he thought that a clear week would be necessary after the conclusion of the Council for a thorough examination of the problem by the French Government in Paris before coming to London.<sup>7</sup>

Copy sent to Paris.

<sup>7</sup> A marginal comment by Sir R. Vansittart here reads: 'I think this is probably wise and we shd encourage the idea as the best chance of avoiding failure. R.V.'

**No. 332**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 48 [C 276/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 11, 1935*<sup>1</sup>

Sir,

In the course of a conversation with Mr. Sargent on January 9th the German Ambassador expressed the opinion that at the forthcoming session of the Council at Geneva, M. Laval and Baron Aloisi would wish to discuss the questions of disarmament and rearmament. M. von Hoesch asked Mr. Sargent to convey to me the hope that no cut and dried decision would be taken at Geneva by the three Powers for subsequent presentation to Germany. There were already indications, the Ambassador said, that the three Powers were inclined to revert to the bad old system of presenting Germany with a *fait accompli* and then calling upon her to accept it under penalty of being convicted of evil intentions if she refused to do so. He hinted that the recent Franco-Italian agreement in Rome regarding Austria<sup>2</sup> was an instance of this tendency.

2. M. von Hoesch was informed that his message would certainly be conveyed to me, but that he might be assured that there was no intention on any side to impose decisions on Germany without previous discussion or negotiation. What made discussion with Germany sometimes difficult, Mr. Sargent observed, was the fact that she no longer sat on the Council of the League. Her absence would make itself particularly noticeable and regrettable at the forthcoming session, which was to deal with the Saar. To this M. von Hoesch remarked that all possible problems arising out of the Saar plebiscite had already been settled by the agreement reached in Rome last December,<sup>3</sup> and there was thus really nothing left for the Council to do but to give effect to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants of the territory. Mr. Sargent suggested that the existence of a considerable minority might create a problem in itself, but to this M. von Hoesch replied that once there was a majority for Germany, however small, there could be no minority question, since that

<sup>1</sup> According to an entry on the Foreign Office file this despatch was sent to Berlin on January 11, but cf. No. 329, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 335 below, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 255, note 3.

had been settled by the agreement reached in Rome. One thing was quite certain, M. von Hoesch added, and that was that there could be no partition of territory on the ground of such a minority, however big. The concessions made by Germany in the negotiations conducted by the Council Committee in Rome had been authorised by Herr Hitler on the assumption that the Saar Territory should go as a whole to the country obtaining the majority of the votes at the plebiscite, and that there should in no case be any partition of the territory. If Germany were to be 'robbed' of her rights in the Saar as she had been robbed in Upper Silesia,<sup>4</sup> there would be an end to any prospect of reconciliation between her and the League.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>4</sup> A reference to the recommendation of the League of Nations, accepted by the Conference of Ambassadors on October 19, 1921, dividing Upper Silesia between Germany and Poland following the plebiscite of March 20, 1921; cf. First Series, Volume XVI, No. 352.

### No. 333

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 12, 12.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 7 Telegraphic [R 319/1/67]*

MOSCOW, *January 12, 1935, 12.55 p.m.*

My telegram No. 5.<sup>1</sup>

Monsieur Litvinov before leaving for Geneva expressed his annoyance to the Austrian Minister at Union of Socialist Soviet Republics being left out of the proposed Italian agreement. On being informed that he was in good company since Great Britain was also not a party to it, he replied he did not think that being in good company. It would appear therefore that his opinion coincides with that reported in my telegram.

Repeated to Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> No. 327.

### No. 334

*Sir J. Simon (Geneva) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received January 14)*  
*No. 1 L.N. [C 319/1/18]*

GENEVA, *January 12, 1935*

The United Kingdom delegate to the League of Nations presents his compliments, and has the honour to transmit record of a conversation with Baron Aloisi about the Saar plebiscite.



GENEVA, January 11, 1935

*Record of a Conversation with Baron Aloisi*

Mr. Eden and I had a short conversation with Baron Aloisi this afternoon about the Saar. I had suggested privately earlier in the day that, inasmuch as the present mandate of the Aloisi Committee extends only to the taking of the plebiscite, it would be desirable for the Council to extend this mandate so that the Committee would be authorised to consider and make recommendations about the problems that will have to be solved in consequence of the result of the plebiscite. It seemed to me that the best course would be to confer this further authority on Baron Aloisi's Committee before the plebiscite was taken on Sunday next, January 13th—certainly before the result of the plebiscite was known, as otherwise there would have to be a meeting of the Council for the purpose after the excitement and possibly the added anxiety which the declared results may cause. It was arranged in the course of the day that my suggestion should be followed, and there will be a meeting of the Council to-morrow (Saturday) at 12 o'clock for this purpose.

In our conversation this afternoon I pressed the two points that, if as a result of the plebiscite the Council was going to decide on the union of the territory with Germany, it was most desirable that this decision should be very promptly taken and that the interval which would then elapse before the decision was carried into effect should be as short as possible, and should be definitely fixed forthwith. In other words, the calendar date when the transfer will take effect should be known as soon as may be. Baron Aloisi agreed on both points, but pointed out that there might be a good deal to do. Herr Berger, the German representative who had been at Rome, was coming to Geneva to-morrow, and M. Rueff, the French expert, will also be here.

I asked Baron Aloisi what would be the probable view of the Italian Government if the result of the plebiscite was less overwhelmingly favourable for one solution than we could wish. What was his view as to the possibility of a solution by subdivision of the territory? Baron Aloisi was cautious in reply, observing that we must wait to see what the results are. I agreed, but said that we must remember that proposals for subdivision would not mean (as they had meant in the case of Silesia,<sup>1</sup> that one portion would go to one country and the other portion to another,<sup>1</sup> but it would mean that an area under international authority which was already none too large would be reduced to a yet smaller size and might leave a residue not suitable for the continuance of an international régime. Baron Aloisi agreed, and said that the problem would be still more difficult if the small area that did not opt for Germany, instead of being contiguous to France, was an oasis in some other part of the area. Mr. Eden and I gave Baron Aloisi to understand that our view would be that on grounds of high policy it was very much to be desired that no subdivision was decided on. After all, it could not be expected in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 332, note 4.

any area that every single person would be of one mind, and the mere fact that there was a minority would not necessarily justify the perpetuation of so difficult a position. With all this Baron Aloisi appeared to agree, but I gathered that he was communicating with Signor Mussolini.

J. S.

No. 335

*Sir J. Simon (Geneva) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received January 14)*

*No. 6 L.N. [R 318/1/67]*

GENEVA, January 12, 1935

The United Kingdom delegate to the League of Nations presents his compliments, and has the honour to transmit a record of a conversation between Sir J. Simon and M. Laval respecting the Franco-Italian conversations.

ENCLOSURE IN No. 335

*Record of Conversation between Sir J. Simon and M. Laval at the Hôtel des Bergues, Geneva, on Saturday, January 12, 1935, at 3.30 p.m.*

A conversation took place to-day between Sir J. Simon and M. Laval at the latter's request. The following were present:—

M. Laval.	Sir J. Simon.
M. Bargeton.	Mr. Eden.
M. Massigli.	Mr. Strang.

SIR J. SIMON began by congratulating M. Laval on the results of his visit to Rome, and by thanking him for the warm welcome extended to the British troops on their passage through France to the Saar, and for the helpfulness shown by the French military and civil authorities.

M. LAVAL then proceeded to explain one by one the various agreements reached between the French and Italian Governments at Rome.

He first read the text of the *General Declaration* signed on January 7th<sup>1</sup> which, as M. Laval explained, wiped the slate clean between the two countries and constituted a full discharge from the Italian Government in final execution of the London Agreement of the 26th April, 1915. The text of this declaration was given to the press on January 11th.

He then showed Sir J. Simon the text of the *agreement regarding Austria*.<sup>2</sup>

SIR J. SIMON said he knew that Italy and Austria had assented to this Agreement. What was the situation as regards the other countries mentioned? In particular, what would be the situation if Germany refused to accede?

<sup>1</sup> See No. 349 below, § 3(c). See also *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 139, pp. 946-7, and, for the London Agreement of 1915, Cmd. 671 of 1920.

<sup>2</sup> See *B.F.S.P.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 947-8. An authoritative text of this agreement was received in the Foreign Office at 8.15 p.m. on January 14 in Rome telegram No. 4 Saving of January 12.

M. LAVAL replied that Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Roumania had given their assent. As regards Germany, Hungary and Poland, he was not in a position to say. He had taken no step at Rome without consulting the Little Entente. Italy had been unwilling to agree that the three members of the Little Entente should be treated on the same basis. The solution had been to place Roumania with France together in a different category from the others. Italy had asked that Poland should be placed in the same category as France and Roumania. He had at first resisted this, but had subsequently yielded. M. Benes had, indeed, seen some advantage in including Poland. Poland had been unwilling to associate herself with the guarantee to Czechoslovakia in the proposed Eastern Pact. She might be prepared to take a more conciliatory line as regards the Rome Agreement, and it was as well to give her the chance.

M. Laval thought that Hungary would be likely to accept. Hungary had received considerable satisfaction in that one of the undertakings in the Agreement was 'not to foment or favour any action having as its object an attempt *by force* on the territorial integrity and the political or social régime of one of the Contracting Parties.' This left the Hungarians free to express what view they liked about revision. The Yugoslav Government had pressed for the deletion of the words 'by force,' but M. Laval had resisted this.

SIR J. SIMON said that perhaps he had not made himself quite clear. The question he wanted to ask was whether, if Germany refused to come in to the proposed agreement, Italy would, for example, still continue to be bound *vis-à-vis* Yugoslavia by the undertaking not to interfere in internal affairs and not to foment or favour action having as its object an attempt by force on the territorial integrity or upon the political or social régime?

M. LAVAL replied in the affirmative. Italy would be morally bound. The special advantage which Italy derived from the Rome Agreement was that Italy would not now be left alone against Germany, if, following upon a German triumph in the Saar, Hitler should commit some folly in Austria. The Rome Agreement made provision for non-interference and non-aggression. What it did not contain was a provision for mutual assistance. There was one thing for which he had asked and which M. Mussolini had refused. This was a declaration by Italy on the subject of the integrity of Yugoslavia similar to the Declaration of February 1934 as regards Austria.<sup>3</sup> While, however, unable to give such a declaration at present, M. Mussolini had promised to find an occasion to make such a declaration in the near future, probably about the end of January.

He proposed now to consult M. Mussolini as to the steps to be taken to conclude the new agreements contemplated in the Protocol concluded at Rome.

SIR J. SIMON asked whether bilateral agreements were in contemplation.

M. LAVAL made no clear reply to this question.

He then showed Sir J. Simon the *protocol on armaments*, copy of which had already been communicated confidentially by the Quai d'Orsay to His

<sup>3</sup> See Volume VI, Nos. 288 and 290.

Majesty's Embassy (see Geneva despatch to Foreign Office No. 5 of January 12th).<sup>4</sup>

SIR J. SIMON noted the statement in the first paragraph that Germany could not modify by unilateral action her obligations in the matter of armaments. He said that a similar statement had already been made on his instructions by Sir E. Phipps to Baron von Neurath<sup>5</sup> after the debate in the House of Commons on November 28th, when figures had been made public and were communicated to Germany relating to German rearmament. The German Government were informed that it would be erroneous to assume that His Majesty's Government did not consider the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles to be any longer binding on Germany. His Majesty's Government did not recognise the right of any signatory to free itself from its obligations without negotiation and agreement with other signatories. This communication had not been published lest its publication might disturb other negotiations.

In reply to a question from M. Massigli, Sir J. Simon said that the statement to Sir E. Phipps did not repeat the statement made by Mr. Baldwin in the House as regards the maintenance of superiority over Germany in the matter of air armaments.<sup>6</sup>

M. LAVAL then turned to, and explained upon the map, the agreements in regard to (1) *Libia* [*sic*], (2) *Somaliland*, and (3) *Abyssinia*, and also (4) the agreement in regard to *Tunis*. He read extracts from these agreements and said that instructions would be given for the communication of the texts<sup>7</sup> of them all for the confidential information of His Majesty's Government. He emphasised (1) that the territory ceded to Italy opposite Aden was to be a demilitarised zone, and (2) that the arrangements made as regards the zone of the Jibuti-Addis Ababa Railway would not in any way prejudice the rights enjoyed by His Majesty's Government under the Treaty of 1906.<sup>8</sup>

M. Laval said that the Rome Agreements were a bitter pill for Germany. It could not be pleasant for the Germans to be made to realise that so many other countries needed to reach a common agreement for the purpose of guarding against German action in Austria. Austria was of course the kernel of the whole situation.

<sup>4</sup> This despatch is not preserved in Foreign Office archives. For the text of the protocol on armaments see No. 328, enclosure.

<sup>5</sup> See Nos. 293 and 302.

<sup>6</sup> See 295 *H.C. Deb.*, 5 s., col. 883.

<sup>7</sup> The reference appears to be to the 'Treaty between France and Italy regarding their Interests in Africa' (*B.F.S.P.*, vol. 139, pp. 948-50) and the 'Protocol between France and Italy regarding Italians in Tunisia' (*ibid.*, pp. 950-1), both signed in Rome on January 7, 1935. Mr. D. C. Watt, 'The Secret Laval-Mussolini Agreement of 1935 on Ethiopia' (*The Middle East Journal* 1961, pp. 69-78) discusses the course of the negotiations, and publishes three related documents which were known in substance to the Foreign Office at the time. The Italian Embassy also gave particulars of the agreements to the Foreign Office. These will be printed in Volume XIV, relating to the Ethiopian crisis.

<sup>8</sup> A reference to the tripartite agreement relating to Abyssinia signed in London on December 13, 1906, between Great Britain, France, and Italy: see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 99, pp. 486-9.

SIR J. SIMON asked how the Rome Agreements were regarded by the Soviet Government.

M. LAVAL said that the Soviet Government were uneasy because they imagined that the Rome Agreements would sidetrack the proposed Eastern Pact. They were inclined to imagine that if the questions of the Saar and Austria were peaceably settled, Germany would turn towards the East again. The Poles were also a little uneasy about this, and M. Beck might now be a little more amenable in his attitude towards the Eastern Pact. M. Laval had, however, assured M. Litvinov that he had no intention of abandoning the Eastern Pact. He would communicate to Sir J. Simon, for his private information, a new note to Germany on this subject in answer to the last communication<sup>9</sup> received in September from Berlin. He proposed now to take up the Eastern Pact again. It was clear to him that nothing could be done with Germany in the matter of armaments until Germany gave proof of good-will by participating in these Pacts. Without these Pacts there could be no security. So far from sidetracking the Eastern Pact the Agreement of Rome would facilitate it. He proposed to point this out to M. Litvinov.

SIR J. SIMON recalled that when he had seen M. Laval in Paris before Christmas, the latter had informed him that the Eastern Pact would be taken up in combination with, and not before, discussion with Germany of an agreement about armaments. He had reported accordingly to his colleagues in London.<sup>10</sup>

M. LAVAL confirmed this.

SIR J. SIMON also reminded M. Laval that on the same occasion he had promised to pay an early visit with M. Flandin to London. Would it be possible for him now to fix the convenient date? So far as we were concerned it would be desirable that the visit should, if possible, take place in the week preceding the 28th January, when the House of Commons reassembled.

M. LAVAL said that he would need at least three days in Paris after his return from Geneva in order to prepare for the visit. He must consult his colleagues and in particular the Defence Ministers.

After discussion, it was provisionally agreed that, subject to M. Flandin's views, the French Ministers might leave Paris on Thursday, the 24th, spend Friday and Saturday in London, and return on Sunday, the 27th.<sup>11</sup>

M. LAVAL said, as regards the London conversations, that it was essential not to build on sand. He was in favour of a liberal policy towards Germany, but the policy should be at the same time strong and firm. It would be fatal to construct a mere façade under the pretext of the necessity of reviving the Disarmament Conference and securing the return of Germany to the League. These things were desirable, but they must not be bought too dearly. M. Mussolini had said to him in Rome that there were three possible policies to

<sup>9</sup> See Nos. 84 and 85.

<sup>10</sup> See No. 311.

<sup>11</sup> In his telegram No. 6 of January 13 to Sir R. Vansittart, Sir J. Simon mentioned these dates, and added: 'Please warn the Prime Minister that these are dates in contemplation and let me know if they are so unsuitable as to make a later programme preferable even though it will clash with House of Commons business.'

adopt towards Germany. First, the present ridiculous policy of doing nothing, while Germany armed and rearmed. Secondly, war. It might well be, M. Laval said, that the best policy would be for Great Britain, France and Italy to tell Hitler that unless he disarmed they would make war: but none of their peoples were prepared to do this. Thirdly, negotiation. This was, in M. Laval's view, the only possible policy, but in the conduct of such negotiations firmness was essential.

SIR J. SIMON said that this analysis was admirable, and he hoped that M. Laval would repeat it when he came to London.

M. LAVAL said that not only so, but that he would repeat it to his own colleagues when he returned. He was aware that in taking such a line he would be criticised. The worst of all possible policies was to do nothing, and he would rather throw up his portfolio than adopt this course. He proposed on his return to Paris to explore the situation with his colleagues, and he proposed first of all to ask the Ministers for War and for Air what their demands were.

### No. 336

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 15, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 16 Saving: Telegraphic [C 336/55/18]*

BERLIN, January 14, 1935

My telegram No. 16 of January 13th.<sup>1</sup>

'The Times' proposals continue to excite comment in the German press and the reactions in Paris and elsewhere are being telegraphed here at some length.

The 'D.A.Z.'<sup>2</sup> receives the proposal that the ex-allies should formally waive their rights under Part V of the Treaty<sup>3</sup> and legalise Germany's defaults very ungraciously. Germany needs no such pardon. She has right on her side.

The 'Berliner Tageblatt' thinks that the Italian disarmament proposals are relatively the most acceptable from the German standpoint.

Some of the provincial newspapers note that there is no longer question of a disarmament agreement but of a convention to control rearmament.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram, not printed, referred to German press comment on a leading article in *The Times* of January 12, entitled 'A Critical Moment'. Most of the newspapers assumed 'that article was clearly inspired'.

<sup>2</sup> The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the Military, Naval, and Air Clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.

**No. 337**

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 15, 9.30 a.m.)  
No. 13 L.N. Telegraphic [C 342/55/18]*

*Immediate*

GENEVA, *January 15, 1935, 12.30 a.m.*

Following from Mr. Eden:

Monsieur Massigli has just given me message from Monsieur Laval with reference to visit of French Ministers to London. Monsieur Laval has been in communication with Monsieur Flandin. They are both of opinion that it would be virtually impossible to carry out all preparatory work that is necessary to make the visit to London really useful and yet be able to leave for London on January 24th.<sup>1</sup> French Government are sure that we are as anxious as they that visit should be really fruitful and not be confined to superficial exchanges.

They therefore beg most earnestly that they should be allowed an extra week in which to make ready. This they regard as a bare minimum. French Ministers therefore propose to arrive in London Thursday January 31st.

I should be glad if you could let me know as soon as possible whether that date is acceptable.<sup>2</sup>

Repeated to Paris.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 335.

<sup>2</sup> A note on the file by Mr. Seymour reads: 'On the S. of S. instructions and after consulting No. 10 I have telephoned to Paris that this date may be accepted. H. J. S. Jan. 15.'

**No. 338**

*Mr. Browne (Saarbrücken) to Sir J. Simon  
(Received January 15, 10.25 a.m.)  
No. 4 Telegraphic [C 343/1/18]*

SAARBRÜCKEN, *January 15, 1935, 9.50 a.m.*

Following is result of voting.<sup>1</sup>

Status quo 46,513.

France 2,124.

Germany 477,119.

<sup>1</sup> In the plebiscite held in the Saar Territory on January 13.

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 15, 2.50 p.m.)  
No. 17 Telegraphic [C 366/55/18]*

*Immediate. Very confidential*

BERLIN, January 15, 1935, 2 p.m.

I learn very privately that Ministry of Foreign Affairs and army circles who are anxious to sign Austrian pact<sup>1</sup> and get on with arms convention and Germany's return to the League are somewhat perturbed by Herr Hitler's attitude. Baron von Neurath's preliminary talks have not been very promising. Herr Hitler asks whether proposed non-intervention pact involves total liquidation of Austrian legion in Germany, the suppression of Kampf Ring<sup>2</sup> and other such obvious evidences of German interference, not to mention abolition of prohibitive visa fees<sup>3</sup> which he pretends is economic and not political. All this would he says amount to flagrant desertion of Austrian Nazis by himself and his party.

These circles fear big Saar victory will strengthen Herr Hitler's unwillingness, and they are now looking for a way out of the difficulty.

One high official suggests that Germany should return to the League *after* a short preliminary agreement recognising her present re-armament and guaranteeing her future equality of status. This he thinks might obviate need for an Eastern Pact or anything but the most sketchy of Austrian pacts. It is felt that a quick League decision to restore the Saar would greatly facilitate Germany's return to Geneva.

Repeated to Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 335, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 46, note 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 120, note 7.



### CHAPTER III

## German Rearmament: Anglo-French Conversations: proposed Eastern Pact January 15–February 15, 1935

No. 340

*Notes of an informal conference on German rearmament held in  
Sir R. Vansittart's room on January 15 at 11.15 a.m.*

[C 409/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January* [15]<sup>1</sup>, 1935

1. Our objective must now be numerical limitation rather than reduction, but we should aim at some form of qualitative reduction, e.g. in guns and tanks.

2. Such a convention might include (a) supervision, (b) budgetary publicity, (c) control of trade in and manufacture of arms.

3. The ultimate objective of the forthcoming negotiations (of which the first step is the conversations with France), is the return of Germany to the League and her participation in the agreements proposed above.

4. It is proposed to start on the basis of Germany's armaments at the strength put forward in the Note of Germany's Requirements, dated April 16th, 1934.<sup>2</sup>

(It is not however expected that Germany will now be agreeable to be limited to these figures but will probably place her demands considerably higher, especially in the air).

5. It is desirable that our ideas should be formulated definitely in respect of the maximum limit to which having regard to our own security we would be prepared to let the Germans attain in order to secure a general settlement. For this purpose information is required from the 3 Defence Departments, as follows:—

(a) *Admiralty*. The size of the German Navy, quantitative and qualitative, particularly in relation to existing or proposed naval treaties, and the question of Germany's participation in those treaties.

(b) *War Office*. The size of the German Army, the numbers and calibre of guns which we think should be permitted in relation to the Army, and the size and weight of tanks, and any other points in this connexion.

<sup>1</sup> The copy of this document filed in the Foreign Office on January 17 was undated.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 235, paragraph 6.

The question of para-military organisations, their prohibition or limitation, will also presumably be discussed, and suggestions as to any method of dealing with this problem would be valuable.

(c) *Air Ministry*. The size at which we should desire the German Air Force to be limited. The figures should state particularly the first line air strength. In proposing a figure it should be borne in mind that Germany's air demands will now probably be considerably increased. It is also desirable to specify if possible the types of aircraft which Germany should be allowed, e.g. fighters, bombers, etc.

A figure might also be given, again if possible, for the number of personnel in this air force.

Have the Air Ministry any suggestions as to possible qualitative limitation in respect of aircraft, which would, of course, have to be applied internationally, but which might be valuable to put forward?

6. It is very likely that the French may raise the question of the adoption of the Italian scheme (published in Rome, January 31, 1934).<sup>3</sup> In this connection there is a possibility that the Germans may propose a solution on the basis of a common upper limit within which each Power would make a unilateral declaration of its requirements. The views of the three Defence Departments are also required on these possible suggestions.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 322, note 3.

<sup>4</sup> This document was considered at a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff under the chairmanship of Sir M. Hankey (Secretary to the Cabinet) on January 17; cf. No. 372 below. Before turning to the Foreign Office 'Notes', Sir M. Hankey gave some particulars of a proposed 'White Paper on Imperial defence setting out their [i.e. His Majesty's Government's] policy'; cf. No. 526 below, note 2.

## No. 341

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 16, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 19 L.N. Telegraphic [C 370/55/18]*

GENEVA, *January 16, 1935, 1 a.m.*

Following from Mr. Eden:

Monsieur Laval in course of conversation I had with him this morning<sup>1</sup> mentioned that he was being a little embarrassed by the extent to which our Press was foreshadowing a change of view on the part of French Government in respect of German re-armament. He particularly mentioned a Havas message from London in the press here this morning, reporting the interest of the British Cabinet in a proposal that 'victorious nations should renounce military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles'. He was already being criticised in Paris where political situation was not too easy and Monsieur Franklin-Bouillon<sup>2</sup> had given notice of an interpel[l]ation. Monsieur Laval did not

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was drafted on January 15.

<sup>2</sup> Member of the French Chamber of Deputies for Seine and Oise.

speak in any sense reproachfully, but his comments are perhaps worth recording in view of extreme sensitiveness of French opinion on the subject of German re-armament and consequent danger that attempts may be made in Paris to secure undertakings from French Ministers before they visit London which would limit their freedom of action.

**No. 342**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 16, 10.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 18 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 387/1/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, January 16, 1935

I dined last night with Herr von Buelow.

He is perturbed because he hears from Italians that Monsieur Massigli will propose that the Council should discuss certain details respecting effective demilitarization of the Saar. This, Herr von Buelow feels should merely be submitted to a small committee and thus avoid delay. Germany does not deny that the Saar is in demilitarized zone but there are no fortresses there, and only unimportant details regarding barracks, railway platforms etc. remain to be settled.

Herr von Buelow earnestly hopes that the Council will immediately announce date for handing over of the Saar and that date will be within the next four weeks or so.

French Ambassador will hand to Herr von Buelow today text of French reply to German Government respecting Eastern Pact.<sup>1</sup> Herr von Buelow did not seem hopeful of Germany's agreeing to sign this or Austrian Pact or to protocol<sup>2</sup> of the League. I asked what then the Chancellor meant in his speech yesterday<sup>3</sup> by 'restoration of solidarity of nations'. Herr von Buelow thought he only meant full diplomatic discussions and participation in occasional conferences but he admitted the Chancellor had not yet made up his mind. I made it clear that much more would be expected from Germany.

I hope to be able to report further tomorrow as Baron von Neurath returns today from Berchtesgaden.

Repeated to Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> An English translation of this French memorandum of January 15 is printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 440.

<sup>2</sup> The wording here was queried on the filed copy and 'to return to the League' was suggested.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Times*, January 16, p. 10, for Herr Hitler's broadcast speech on the results of the Saar plebiscite.

**No. 343**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 16, 11.10 a.m.)*  
*No. 19 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 388/1/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, *January 16, 1935*

Geneva telegram No. 18.<sup>1</sup>

I should deprecate any formal representations by us alone to German Government on this subject as we have always maintained that Mr. Knox is a League and not a British Government official.<sup>2</sup>

I might however mention the matter in the course of my next conversation with Baron von Neurath should you think it desirable.

If formal representations are desired they would, I think, more suitably be made by countries represented on the Council of League.

Repeated to Geneva and Paris.

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram of January 15 to the Foreign Office Mr. Eden passed on a message from Mr. Knox, who said he would be 'most grateful if some representations could be made in Berlin to attempt to check during next few very difficult weeks propaganda against Governing Commission which has been rife for so long'.

<sup>2</sup> Sir R. Vansittart minuted this paragraph as follows: 'This has nothing to do with the case now, if as I presume we really want to ensure against 11th hour danger of violence to a British subject who is being personally and violently reviled. R.V.'

**No. 344**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 17)*  
*No. 17 Saving: Telegraphic [C 418/1/18]*

BERLIN, *January 16, 1935*

Hitler, I learn privately, could hardly believe his ears when the Saar figures<sup>1</sup> came over the wireless. Bürckel had guaranteed a vote of 75% for Germany. When Hitler heard the actual figure he remarked that the Saar had beaten the vote of many German districts at the last German election. Anything less than 70% would, he admitted, have imperilled his position as Führer.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 338.

**No. 345**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 17)*  
*No. 19 Saving: Telegraphic [C 420/1/18]*

BERLIN, *January 16, 1935*

My telegram No. 18 of today.<sup>1</sup>

Herr von Bülow said that on hearing of M. Massigli's intended proposal he suspected the French had hoped, by inviting Germany to be represented at

<sup>1</sup> No. 342.

the Saar Council meeting of the League,<sup>2</sup> to lure her into discussing matters that she was unwilling to discuss.

I assured Herr von Bülow that his suspicions were entirely unfounded. The idea was a British one,<sup>3</sup> though it had received the subsequent blessing of France and Italy. Moreover, it had been conceived in the belief that the presence of a German representative at that particular Council meeting would facilitate and hasten a final settlement of the Saar question.

Repeated to Geneva, telegram No. 4 Saving.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 323.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 316.

## No. 346

*Record by Mr. Sargent of a conversation with Prince Bismarck*

[C 596/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 16, 1935*

In discussing this afternoon Hitler's broadcast<sup>1</sup> and Flandin's statement of yesterday,<sup>2</sup> Prince Bismarck wondered what M. Flandin meant when he spoke of France attaching greater importance to acts than to words. What acts did they expect from Germany?

I suggested agreement to limit German armaments and Germany's adherence to the Austrian and Eastern Pacts. To this Prince Bismarck did not respond, except to say that as regards limitation, there was of course already a large measure of agreement on which to build, although the platform contemplated in the discussions of last January to April had since then changed, owing to the increase in armaments of various countries. Generally speaking, however, the possibility of a general settlement on the lines suggested by the 'Times' on Saturday<sup>3</sup> depended in the long run on the contribution which H.M. Government were prepared to make on the subject of security.

To this I replied that everyone no doubt had his contribution to make, including Germany, and that in view of Hitler's broadcast of yesterday I sincerely hoped she was prepared to make it. By doing so she would confute the pessimists who had foretold that if Germany obtained a resounding victory in the Saar this would encourage her to adopt an uncompromising and unhelpful attitude in other questions which at present separated her from the other Great Powers of Europe.

O. G. SARGENT

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 342, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> M. Flandin's statement on the Saar plebiscite is printed in *The Times*, January 16, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> January 12. Cf. No. 336, note 1.

No. 347

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 17, 6.5 p.m.)*  
*No. 21 Telegraphic [C 435/55/18]*

BERLIN, January 17, 1935, 5.35 p.m.

My telegram No. 18.<sup>1</sup>

I met Herr von Bülow at dinner last night and he confirmed, after seeing Baron von Neurath on the latter's return from Berchtesgaden, the impression reported in above telegram regarding the Chancellor's probable unwillingness to conclude pacts or to return to Geneva. I asked how then could Germany expect to get what she wanted in the rearmament sphere to which he replied cynically that she wanted nothing as she had already taken it. He told me, however, that he had that day received from the French and Italian Ambassadors authentic text of Rome procès-verbal on Austria<sup>2</sup> and that he hoped to reply thereto in a week or at the most two. I gather from my two colleagues that this reply will probably consist in searching questions regarding foreign loans to Austria, particularly when political considerations are attached thereto, funds provided by foreign States to Austrian political organisations etc.

Finally Herr von Bülow said that he had not yet read the French reply about the Eastern Pact handed to him yesterday by the French Ambassador;<sup>3</sup> but he declared that Germany would not on any account sign Mutual Assistance Agreement.

My Italian colleague confirms what I have from time to time reported regarding the growing German pretensions in rearmament sphere and agrees with me in fearing that the big Saar victory will still further whet not only the German armaments but also the territorial appetite.

Repeated to Geneva and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 342.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 439; cf. also No. 335 above, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 342, note 1.

No. 348

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 18, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 20 Saving: Telegraphic [C 473/55/18]*

BERLIN, January 17, 1935

My telegram No. 21.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of our conversation yesterday Herr von Buelow remarked that Germany would require in future complete equality of rights not only in spirit but in actual fact. She would therefore be careful to examine any pact or agreement that might be proposed, with a view to finding out whether

<sup>1</sup> No. 347.

there was not some 'snag' lurking in it. In this connexion he took objection to penultimate paragraph of Franco-Italian procès verbale [*sic*] concerning consultation between France and Italy in case Austrian independence and integrity should be threatened. He maintained that this constituted a kind of Franco-Italian protectorate over Austria.

I pointed out that by following paragraph that consultation was extended to other Powers but Herr von Buelow retorted that he objected to non-inclusion of Germany among the *original* consultative Powers.

This shows probable trend of eventual German reply. Meanwhile I hear privately that there are two currents of opinion in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself—one shared originally by Baron von Neurath and certain officials in favour of a reasonable attitude of German co-operation and eventual return to Geneva—the other headed by Herr von Buelow. Herr Hitler himself, it seems, who was moderate enough so long as the Saar was doubtful now has been carried away by the big German victory and claims that an election in Austria today would be a triumph for National Socialism. Baron von Neurath, who displayed great weakness recently during my interview with his master,<sup>2</sup> appears upon this occasion also to have capitulated at Berchtesgarden [*sic*] against what was his better judgment.

I hear that moderate party in Ministry of Foreign Affairs hopes that Herr Hitler when he returns to Berlin may be compelled to listen to more sober counsels of the army and of business circles, both of which are opposed to a policy calculated to isolate Germany.<sup>3</sup>

Repeated to Rome and Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 221.

<sup>3</sup> This telegram led to a number of minutes, in the course of which Mr. Sargent wrote on January 18 with evident reference to his proposal in No. 349 below, that the 'general inclination to truculence' in German governing circles 'is yet another reason for our coming out at once with a declaration to show that we intend to support France and Italy, both as regards Austria and as regards unilateral repudiation of Part V'. Sir R. Vansittart wrote on the same day agreeing with this proposal and adding: 'A truculent Germany is a completely intractable one. It is necessary for H.M.G. to secure a success in this matter—for internal as well as external reasons. I do not think they will achieve such a success, unless the step that we recommend is taken.' Sir J. Simon wrote: 'I agree with it all. J. S. Jan. 20.'

## No. 349

### *Memorandum by Mr. Sargent*

[C 1009/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 17, 1935*

*Possible desirability of a declaration by His Majesty's Government on certain matters arising out of the recent Franco-Italian Agreement*

In view of Herr Hitler's triumph in the Saar Plebiscite, it may be considered desirable at an early date—i.e. before the meeting of Parliament and before the arrival of the French Ministers—that H.M. Government should make

some public declaration designed to show their community of interests with France and Italy. It is as yet uncertain what effect the big German victory in the Saar will have on Herr Hitler's foreign policy, but a timely reminder that the United Kingdom cannot be detached from France and Italy may have a sobering effect upon him.

2. There are three matters arising out of the recent Rome Agreements on which such a statement on the part of H.M. Government may be considered useful. They are all matters on which H.M. Government will probably have to define their attitude sooner or later, and until the 'Saar triumph' it had been thought that it would be time enough to do so when Parliament met. The result in the Saar and its possibly intoxicating effect on German policy make it desirable to consider whether earlier action is not desirable. It is felt that if a declaration by H.M. Government is to have any useful effect on Herr Hitler, it should be made without delay, for German future policy will begin to take shape and to crystallise during the fortnight between the Saar plebiscite and the conclusion of the French visit to London.

3. The three matters arising out of the Rome Agreement[s] are the following.

(a) *Declaration regarding German armaments.*<sup>1</sup>

The Rome Agreements included a Protocol signed by M. Laval and Signor Mussolini, in which the French and Italian Governments, referring to the Declaration on Equality of Rights of the 11th December, 1932, agreed in recognising that no country can modify by unilateral action its obligations in regard to armaments, and that, should this eventuality materialise, they would consult together.

Representations of this nature had already in point of fact been made privately to the German Government by H.M. Government,<sup>2</sup> and M. Laval has been informed accordingly.<sup>3</sup>

At the Cabinet Meeting of January 9th the Prime Minister said that we could now come out into the open in this.

It would indeed be possible to state openly that the German Government have already been informed privately, with reference to the disarmament clauses of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, that H.M. Government do not recognise the right of any signatory of a Treaty to free itself from the obligations imposed upon it without negotiation and agreement with the other signatories.

(b) *The Rome Agreement relating to Austria.*<sup>4</sup>

The arguments for now declaring our approval of this and our right to participate in the consultations it envisages are:

(1) We have already undertaken to do this in our own time and words.

(2) If Hitler, as a consequence of the Saar vote, is feeling full of corn, a sign of solidarity with France and Italy will prevent him kicking over the traces

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 328.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 302.

<sup>3</sup> A marginal note by Sir J. Simon here read: 'So has Signor Grandi been informed.'

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 335, note 2.



and making on his account some pronouncement about Austria which would antagonise French and Italian opinion at a moment when we particularly wish to prepare the ground for subsequent negotiations with Germany.

(3) Sir E. Drummond recommended<sup>5</sup> that we should make this statement soon on the ground that it would enhance the popularity of the Rome Agreements. As long as the attitude of the United Kingdom is doubtful the other Governments, and especially Germany, will hesitate to commit themselves on the Rome proposals, and such delay may well be dangerous and give the wild men in Germany time to organise resistance to counsels of moderation.

(c) *The General Franco-Italian Declaration.*<sup>6</sup>

This is as follows:

'The Head of the Government and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs have signed a general declaration by which it is put on record that the principal questions in suspense between the two countries have been liquidated; it asserts the intention of the two Governments to develop the traditional friendship which unites the two Nations and to collaborate in a spirit of mutual trust in the work of reconstruction; and it lays down that the two Governments will proceed together to all consultations which the circumstances may require.'

This general declaration is not the least striking part of the published account of the proceedings in Rome, and in any declaration by H.M. Government it would be desirable for them to associate themselves with it.

4. The only objection to an immediate declaration is that if we volunteer one now we get nothing in return. If we keep it in reserve until the French Ministers arrive we can use it as one means of pleasing them. It is doubtful, however, whether this argument outweighs the counter-arguments in favour of an immediate declaration. But it would certainly be desirable, if we make such an immediate declaration, to warn the French Government at the same time that we expect them to be ready in London to make concrete contributions and concessions with a view to enable us to initiate successful negotiations with Germany, and that our declaration on matters of principle must not be interpreted as meaning that we are prepared to agree to apply in practice to Germany a policy which is bound to lead to a deadlock.<sup>7</sup>

O. G. SARGENT

<sup>5</sup> In Rome telegram No. 34 of January 11 to the Foreign Office, not printed.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 335, note 1.

<sup>7</sup> Sir R. Vansittart gave instructions on January 17 that this paper, with which he agreed, should be submitted to Sir J. Simon whose comment, probably on January 20 or 21, was as follows: 'I suggest that the declaration should be *prepared* now. But I incline to think that it should be held in reserve for the French visit. We must have some *result* from that visit and if this card is held up, we may extract another from France which she otherwise would not be willing to play . . .' The last part of this minute and the date have been destroyed in binding.

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)**No. 85 [C 438/55/18]*FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 17, 1935*

Sir,

In the course of my interview with Signor Grandi this morning His Excellency enquired as to the approaching visit of French Ministers and I gave him a general sketch of the purpose of the proposed discussions. I said that we had, of course, no intention of reaching a formal or exclusive Anglo-French agreement, but we were deeply impressed with the importance of not letting the European situation drift. Now that the Rome pacts had been reached and that the Saar problem was in a fair way to find a settlement, Europe ought not to lose any time in taking the next steps for consolidating peace. I felt sure that Italy would agree with us that of all policies the worst was to do nothing about it. Passage of time only made the problem more difficult and Germany more *intransigent*. What, therefore, was needed was a series of consultations, in which, of course, Italy would take her proper part, to determine our immediate objective and the methods and limits by and within which it could be pursued. It would be difficult, for Germany realised that she had not suffered by leaving Geneva, and recent events might make her still more confident. But that was only one reason the more for acting promptly now. I should deprecate the idea being formed that, as part of what was immediately possible, an elaborate, detailed and world-wide convention about armaments could be realised, for the inherent difficulties of so vast a project had been increased by Japan's action<sup>1</sup> and by some other recent tendencies. But it was essential to make every effort to get agreement which would include in its results Germany's return within the circle, under agreements which would constitute a real contribution to security, together with such agreements as were now practicable—even though limited in scope and application—on the subject of armaments. Signor Grandi said that he agreed with this analysis and I undertook that he should be kept informed of the course of events as they emerge from our discussions with the French.

I am, &amp;c.,

JOHN SIMON

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 331, note 5.

**No. 351**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 18, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 49 Telegraphic [C 437/55/18]*

ROME, *January 18, 1935, 4 a.m.*

Addressed to Geneva telegram No. 16 January 17th.

Reliable official at Italian Foreign Office told me this evening that German rearmament demands had increased to 400,000 men and 3,000 aeroplanes.<sup>1</sup>

Repeated to Foreign Office, Paris and Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Vansittart commented in a minute of January 18: 'Germany will soon appear in her true colours—those in which I have always known and painted her.' This was initialled by Sir J. Simon on January 20.

**No. 352**

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 18, 11.55 a.m.)*  
*No. 8 Telegraphic [C 474/55/18]*

MOSCOW, *January 18, 1935, 1.20 p.m.*

The result of the Saar plebiscite has been received here with considerable misgiving. Opinion is general that result will be starting point for German schemes of expansion in the east and the south starting with Memel and ending with Anschluss. A member of the commissariat expresses view in private conversation that eastern pact is the only solution to face German plans and that Germany is never likely to adhere to Rome protocol regarding Austria if that were to involve mutual guarantee of assistance.

In regard to disarmament opinion seems to be that it would be a mistake to regularize German position in regard to armaments: Germany intended to rearm and it were better if she had to build secretly as up to date, since in that case she would have more difficulty in manufacturing and assembling tanks, guns, aeroplanes etc. Germany seems more than ever to be thought the chief danger in Europe from Soviet point of view.

Repeated to Berlin.

**No. 353**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 22)*  
*No. 102 [C 557/55/18]*

PARIS, *January 18, 1935*

His Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit to him the under-mentioned document:

*Name and Date*

*Subject*

From: Military Attaché No. 54(35/c)  
17th January 1935

Conversation with Chief of General  
Staff regarding general situation.

ENCLOSURE IN No. 353  
*Colonel Heywood to Sir G. Clerk*  
*No. 54*

PARIS, *January 17, 1935*

Sir,

1. I have the honour to report to Your Excellency that in the course of an interview I had yesterday with General Gamelin, Chief of the General Staff, at the Ministry of War, he made various statements regarding the general situation which may be of interest.

2. General Gamelin said that, although the general political outlook was greatly improved by recent events such as the Rome Agreement and the result of the Saar plebiscite, Germany was quietly but steadily carrying out her programme of rearmament. By the end of next year she would have increased her army to 400,000 men and would have completed her aviation programme; she would by then have approximately the same number of divisions as the French had in France, if one included the frontier troops in the case of France and the police troops in the case of Germany; the organisation of the two armies would be very similar with the Grenzschutz corresponding to the Frontaliers and the Schutzstaffel and Sturmabteilung formations corresponding to the French reserve formations.

3. The problem would soon no longer be one of Gleichberechtigung for Germany but of Gleichberechtigung for France as it would be only with great difficulty, in view of the period of the Lean Years, that the latter would be able to keep up the French Army in France at the same level as that of Germany. They were calling up an additional month of the contingent next April, this would increase the strength of the French Army by about 20,000 men; a further increase would take place in October so that by 1936 they hoped to have with the Colours in France about 280,000 men of the contingent and about 120,000 officers, specialists and professional soldiers (of whom approximately half would be native troops), thus bringing up the total of the French Army in France to a total approximately equal to the 400,000 men of the German Army.

4. In order to maintain the French Army at this level, however, it would be necessary for the recruits called up in April next to serve for 18 months and for those called up in October next to serve for two years, the latter period would have to be maintained until 1941. General Weygand<sup>1</sup> had pointed out that this was the only possible solution to the problem of the Lean Years, and the Government would have to get it adopted, but it would require a good deal of preparation of public opinion.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 208, note 11.

5. I remarked to General Gamelin that his view of the relative positions of the French and German armies seemed a very strong argument in support of what I understood to be the British Government's policy favouring a Convention for the limitation of armaments; that the failure to obtain such a Convention would leave Germany in the position of being able in fact although perhaps not in law, to outdistance France in a race for armaments.

6. General Gamelin replied that he agreed as to the desirability of fixing a 'plafond' to Germany's armaments provided it were possible to ensure the observation of that Convention by Germany. At the same time he added, we must not delude ourselves with the hope that we should succeed in reducing Germany's scale of rearmament or the programme which she had already mapped out for herself and which would be completed by the end of next year.

7. General Gamelin's allusion to General Weygand referred, I believe, to the statement which General Weygand is reported in the Press to have made at his last meeting of the Conseil Supérieur de la Guerre on the previous day.

I have, &c.,

T. G. G. HEYWOOD

#### No. 354

*Letter from Mr. Strang (Geneva) to Mr. Baxter*

[C 530/1/18]

GENEVA, *January 18, 1935*

My dear Baxter,

I enclose copies of a memorandum,<sup>1</sup> communicated to us by Massigli, which was submitted by the French delegation to the Committee of Three on the subject of the demilitarisation of the Saar.

You will notice in the resolution on the Saar adopted last night:<sup>2</sup>

(1) that the Council decides in favour of the union of the territory with Germany 'under the conditions resulting from the Treaty of Versailles'. (This means, among other things, the demilitarisation clauses);

(2) that if the arrangements necessary for the change of régime in the territory<sup>3</sup> have not been decided upon by February 15th, 1935, the Council will itself take the necessary decisions.

It was precisely upon the scope of the contingent compulsory jurisdiction of the Council that difficulties arose yesterday and the day before as between the French and Germans, and delayed the adoption of the resolution.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> See *L.N.O.J.*, February 1935, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> Under the Council Resolution of January 17 the Committee of Three was instructed to decide 'in consultation with the French Government, the German Government and the Governing Commission of the Saar Territory, upon the arrangements necessary for the change of regime in the Territory . . . '.

The French wanted the execution of all measures relating to demilitarisation to be included, failing agreement, within the Council's jurisdiction. The Germans resisted this, and Laval gave way. The position, as we understand it, is that while the Germans have recognised that the Saar Territory falls within the demilitarised zone, and all that this implies, they have succeeded in establishing that the execution of any measures of demilitarisation that may be necessary in view of the transfer of the territory to Germany shall be a matter for arrangement between the two governments, and shall not be the concern of the Council. We have not yet seen the documents in which this arrangement is embodied.<sup>4</sup>

Yours ever,  
WILLIAM STRANG

I have sent a copy of this letter and its enclosure to Paris.

<sup>4</sup> See *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 441 and 448.

### No. 355

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 19, 6 p.m.)*

*No. 24 Telegraphic [C 507/55/18]*

BERLIN, January 19, 1935, 5.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 21.<sup>1</sup>

I saw Minister for Foreign Affairs for the first time today since his return from Berchtesgaden and asked for his impressions on the present state of affairs.

His Excellency replied as follows:—

1. Eastern Pact. On this he could only give me his first impressions for the French reply was a document of sixteen pages containing many words but nothing precise. It will of course be carefully studied but he does not think it will induce Germany to alter attitude she has already taken up in the matter.

2. Austrian Pact. German Government might not object to making a declaration undertaking to respect independence of Austria but as for the pact proposed he thought it most unlikely that they could accede thereto. They would in any case be obliged to ask many searching questions as to meaning of words such as 'non intervention, propaganda, etc.' For instance the Lausanne loan<sup>2</sup> granted on condition that Austria did not agree to 'anschluss' might be held to be contrary to independence. His Excellency

<sup>1</sup> No. 347.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the guaranteed loan of 300 million schillings over 20 years to Austria proposed by the Mixed Committee of Treasury representatives and members of the Financial Committee of the League Council at a special session at Lausanne in June 1932 and agreed to by representatives of the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands, and Austria at Geneva on July 15, 1932; see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 135, pp. 331–8; cf. Gehl, *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss 1931–1938* (London, 1963), pp. 42–4.

then asked smilingly whether Great Britain would join this pact. I replied that whilst she could not actually join she gave it her entire blessing. That he remarked would not be enough to change the German point of view.<sup>3</sup>

3. League of Nations. Baron von Neurath could only confirm the last declaration made by the Chancellor to Mr. Ward Price<sup>4</sup> and held out no hopes of any change in this respect.

I reminded His Excellency of the fears he had recently expressed to me (see my telegram No. 8)<sup>5</sup> lest Germany be faced with any fait accompli or indeed lest even unofficial conversations should take place between the other Powers regarding matters concerning Germany.<sup>6</sup> I asked how if Germany declined all pacts or to return to the League she could expect the others to refrain from discussing such matters together. His Excellency admitted the force of this argument but gave no hope of change in German attitude. He maintained however that Germany would not necessarily be averse from conclusion of any multilateral pacts so long as these did not contain any risk of entanglements or obligations such as she feared.

4. Limitation of armaments. His Excellency raised this question spontaneously and assured me that Germany still desired a convention. I asked whether this would be on the lines contemplated when Mr. Eden visited Berlin.<sup>7</sup> He admitted there would be an increase in the German demands at any rate in the air. Russia had become a new factor owing to probability of Franco-Russian understanding (here I asked whether this was not an additional reason for Germany to join an Eastern Pact but he would not agree). In calculating Germany's strength it would be necessary to consider the large Russian air force (see my telegram No. 281 [Saving] of 29th December).<sup>8</sup> However, much would depend upon France and her readiness or otherwise to disarm or limit her armaments.

Repeated to Geneva and Rome.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 358 below.

<sup>4</sup> A record of Herr Hitler's interview with Mr. Ward Price at Munich on January 17 was printed in the *Daily Mail* of January 18. A translation of the German version of the interview, in which no reference was made either to the activities of the League officials in the Saar or to the colonial question, was received in the Foreign Office on January 24 as enclosure in Berlin despatch No. 61 of January 22. In reply to Mr. Ward Price's query as to the conditions under which Germany could return to the League, Herr Hitler was reported to have said: 'Neither I nor anyone else in Germany thinks of imposing "conditions" for the eventual re-entry of Germany into the League. Whether or not we return to this institution depends exclusively on the question whether we can belong to it as a completely equal nation.'

<sup>5</sup> Of January 10, not printed.

<sup>6</sup> Sir E. Phipps reported in his telegram No. 8, *op. cit.*, that he had reported to Baron von Neurath as follows: 'His Majesty's Government never for a moment contemplated any such proceeding and I knew that I could say the same for other Governments concerned.'

<sup>7</sup> February 19-22, 1934; see Volume VI, Nos. 302-6.

<sup>8</sup> No. 313.

No. 356

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 19, 6 p.m.)*

*No. 23 Telegraphic [C 506/1/18]*

BERLIN, *January 19, 1935, 5.50 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 13.<sup>1</sup>

I spoke this morning as proposed to Baron von Neurath. I added, what is a fact, that Dr. Goebbels' speech was much more violent and offensive than reported by the press. I informed His Excellency moreover of the spontaneous assurance given to me by the Chancellor on New Year's Day to the effect that he would do nothing after the plebiscite calculated to poison Franco-German relations.<sup>2</sup> I pointed out that such speeches and press campaign still being waged against Mr. Knox in particular and the Saar Governing Commission in general were calculated to bring about a very difficult and indeed dangerous situation, for uneducated persons in the Saar might be encouraged to commit acts of violence against members of the Commission. Furthermore I had heard that in some quarters it was intended to stage a hostile demonstration against Mr. Knox when he left. All this would be lamentable and we relied on the German government to use all their influence to stop any propaganda in the German press or elsewhere against Governing Commission.

Baron von Neurath entirely agreed with all I had said, deplored Dr. Goebbels' speech and promised to take immediate action in the sense desired.

Repeated to Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of January 17, not printed, authorized Sir E. Phipps to speak to Baron von Neurath on the lines suggested in No. 343, and to call attention to the 'unseemly remarks about Mr. Knox' made by Dr. Goebbels on the night of January 15 in a speech from the steps of the Reichstag (see *The Times*, January 16, p. 10). Mr. Sargent spoke in similar terms to Prince Bismarck on January 16, see No. 346.

<sup>2</sup> This remark made to Sir E. Phipps at the Chancellor's New Year reception was reported to the Foreign Office in Berlin telegram No. 2 Saving of January 1, not printed.

No. 357

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 19, 6.30 p.m.)*

*No. 31 L.N. Telegraphic [C 505/55/18]*

GENEVA, *January 19, 1935, 6.20 p.m.*

Following from Mr. Eden.

Litvinov asked to see me today and we had some conversation on the present European situation. He is clearly anxious lest when French Ministers come to London His Majesty's Government should endeavour to dissuade them from insistence on signature by Germany of Eastern Pact. Litvinov maintained that such signature is an essential condition of European appeasement. And Germany is always trying to play off France against Russia and Russia against France. She attempts the former publicly and the latter



privately. These tactics must be stopped. Litvinov much hoped that His Majesty's Government, as the outcome of their conversations with French Ministers, would agree with them that the price to be paid by Germany for legalisation of her armaments in a convention must include both the signature by Germany of Eastern Pact and Germany's return to the League. If these conditions were obtained the Soviet Government would be willing to help in negotiation of an arms convention. If, however, the Eastern Pact were not signed and present conditions were to be allowed to continue Russia could have no alternative but to continue arming in her own defence.

Repeated to Moscow.

### No. 358

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 21, 12 noon)*  
*No. 25 Telegraphic [R 456/1/67]*

BERLIN, *January 21, 1935, 12.8 p.m.*

My telegram No. 24.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs assured me that if Great Britain were to join Austrian Pact the German Government would also join. He said this with such emphasis that an eventual German announcement to this effect would not surprise me, though it is difficult to say how genuine his assurance is.

You will remember that Baron von Neurath made me a similar assurance in regard to the Eastern Pact (see paragraph 4 of my telegram No. 190 of July 12th).<sup>2</sup> His Excellency expressed misgivings regarding Russia and complained that Turkey was following a completely Bolshevik foreign policy; he had so informed Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs at a private visit of the latter to Berlin.

Repeated to Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> No. 355.

<sup>2</sup> Volume VI, No. 499.

### No. 359

*Letter from Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*[C 434/55/18]<sup>1</sup>*

*Confidential*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 21, 1935*

Preparations for the reception in London of the French Ministers are proceeding normally. The P[ri]me M[inister], the L[or]d Pr[esident] and I will represent H.M.G. at the meetings and the Cabinet has been engaged in considering what line should be taken as regards the various issues that may be raised during our forthcoming discussions with MM. Flandin and

<sup>1</sup> Only the approved draft of this letter is preserved in Foreign Office archives.

Laval.<sup>2</sup> In the course of our review of the situation one possibility has presented itself which has caused serious misgiving here, and I should be glad of your help so as to prevent some avoidable disappointment to the French and embarrassment to ourselves resulting from the conversations.

It appears from remarks let fall in London by Frenchmen (see for example the record of the remarks made by M. Viénot to Strang enclosed in Sargent's letter to you of January 16th)<sup>3</sup> as well as from something that Flandin himself said to Vansittart when the latter was in Paris in November, that it is probable that the French Ministers will when they come to London ask us to agree to regular consultations between the General Staffs of Great Britain, France and Belgium.

I may tell you for your confidential information that we should be obliged to decline at once any suggestion of this nature which may be made *at the present time* or even in the immediate future, and that we should therefore very much prefer that the French should not make it at all.

The object of our present policy is of course to bring the Germans back to Geneva; and consultations between the General Staffs would not only be inconsistent with that policy, but when they became known, as they inevitably would, would quite possibly frighten the Germans away from Geneva for good. Moreover, we are obliged to consider public opinion in this country in a matter of such importance (particularly as M. Flandin will understand in view of the elections which must be held next year at the latest) and there can I think be no doubt that our public opinion is not yet ripe for the govt. to be in a position to agree to any such consultations taking place.

We should, as I have said, be obliged to make it clear to the French at once that a proposal of the sort indicated can only meet with a refusal on our part if put forward at the present time. It can be taken for granted, I think, that we shall be asked in Parliament when the time comes, whether any such

<sup>2</sup> At a meeting on January 14 the Cabinet considered a Foreign Office memorandum of January 9 (circulated as C.P.6 (35)) containing proposals on the line to be taken at the forthcoming Anglo-French conversations. Paragraphs 2-7 of this memorandum were approved and reproduced in an Appendix to the conclusions of the meeting (No. 3 (35)): certain decisions were also reached on the subject of general security. The substance of these proposals is printed in No. 366 below.

<sup>3</sup> This covering letter is not printed. In the enclosed note of January 8 Mr. Strang said that he had been visited that day by M. Viénot, a Socialist Radical deputy, who had been a member of the French delegation at the Disarmament Conference and had resigned from the French delegation in April 1934 because of disagreement with the policy embodied in the French note of April 17. He thought that there had been 'a change for the better in the outlook of the French Government' and he believed Monsieur Flandin's mind to be working 'in the direction of a *limitation* of armaments on the Italian rather than on the British plan'. In order to bring the French to this point, 'it would be necessary, Monsieur Viénot thinks, for us to create a new situation by *volunteering* some measure of satisfaction to the French desire for security'. He suggested especially 'the reinforcement of the existing Locarno guarantee through the elaboration by the British and French General Staffs (and indeed also by the British and German General Staffs) of the precise measures that would be taken to give effect to the guarantee if a case arose'. Sir J. Simon minuted Mr. Strang's note as follows: 'I should like this to be seen by the P.M. and Mr. Baldwin at once. It is really important. J.S. 10/10.'

suggestion was put forward by the French Ministers during the conversations: and it will be embarrassing for us, and for the French, to have to admit that it was and that we rejected it. It will obviously be far more convenient for both France and ourselves to be able to say that the point never arose at all.

I should be very grateful therefore if you could impress on the French, discreetly, but so as to leave them in no possible doubt of our wishes and intentions, that it will be preferable that this particular topic should be strictly avoided by them at our forthcoming meeting. Such an approach on their part would be quite premature at the present: and we should be obliged, as I have said, to resist the suggestion at once. This is not to say, however, that they need regard themselves as precluded from making some such suggestion, later on, in different circumstances, should they deem it advisable: but I can only repeat that it is essential if they are to be spared disappointment and we are to be spared embarrassment that they should most emphatically refrain from any action of the sort when they are here the week after next.

You will, I think, find it easy to protect us from this risk for I have in mind your telegram No. 333 of Dec. 5<sup>4</sup> when you yourself gave a similar warning to M. Flandin and reported him as repeating that he did not wish to include in the meeting then envisaged anything 'inconvenient'.

I do not want the French Ministers to imagine that we intend in the London interviews to reject any and every idea of a further contribution from our side: but it is this particular question which it would be wisest not to raise in the impending discussion.

And while I am on this subject I may as well advert to the remarks made to Eden in Geneva by M. Laval (Geneva tel. No. 19 of January 16,<sup>5</sup> which you will have seen in the telegram section) about the embarrassment caused him by the extent to which our press was foreshadowing a change of view on the part of the French Govt. in respect of German rearmament and about the extreme sensitiveness of French public opinion on this matter. This has caused me to wonder whether it might not be a good idea if the French Govt. were to make an attempt at educating their public opinion and not merely lie down before it. So pusillanimous an attitude hardly seems to bode well for our forthcoming conversations and I should be grateful if you would consider how most effectively and tactfully to utter a serious word of warning at the Quai d'Orsay on the subject. It seems important that we should take what steps we can to see that the French experts and journalists who are no doubt at present engaged on preparing the necessary documents for the guidance of MM. Flandin and Laval when in London, should realize quite clearly that the London conversations, if they are not to do actual harm, must produce some concrete result leading up to the next stage, and that therefore the French Ministers will be expected to make some real and realistic contribution

<sup>4</sup> The reference was to Paris telegram No. 333 Saving of December 5, 1934, in which Sir G. Clerk reported his conversation with M. Flandin on that day and said: 'I warned him not to think of general staff discussions, and he repeated his desire to include nothing inconvenient.'

<sup>5</sup> No. 341.

to the common problem of how *successfully* to negotiate with Germany (vide M. Laval's own analysis of the situation given to me at Geneva on Jan. 12th).<sup>6</sup> What I am afraid of is that unless some such warning is given, M. Laval will be inclined, in spite of his brave words at Geneva, to take the line of least resistance, and allow his experts to draw up some quite impossible scheme for use at the London conversations.

But I leave entirely to your discretion and knowledge of the local situation to decide on the manner in which this warning can most effectively be conveyed. In any case we should be delighted, needless to say, if you or your Military Attaché, without making any official *démarche*, can glean anything as to the lines on which the French experts *are* actually working and what sort of scheme they are proposing to recommend that their ministers should propound here.

<sup>6</sup> See No. 335.

### No. 360

*Letter from Mr. Strang (Geneva) to Mr. Baxter (Received January 24)*<sup>1</sup>  
[C 617/1/18]

GENEVA, *January 21, 1935*

My dear Baxter,

Knox tells me that the three chief causes for the smallness of the vote for the status quo in the Saar plebiscite were the following:—

(1) The agreements reached at Rome under the auspices of Baron Aloisi's Committee.<sup>2</sup>

The adherents of the status quo concluded that the French had sold them for the sake of payment for the mines, and other financial advantages.

(2) The success of the Einheitsfront meeting.<sup>3</sup> This was an essentially 'Red' meeting, and its very success rather frightened the Catholic elements, who for the first time saw the status quo movement in its true colours.

(3) The advice of the Catholic Bishops.<sup>4</sup> This was broadcast everywhere while news of the more cautious attitude of the Vatican was suppressed in the territory.

Large numbers of voters introduced slips into the voting envelopes, together with their vote for Germany, bearing such words as the following:—

'For Germany but against Hitler.'

'We enter the Reich in order to change it.'

'Only God can help us.'

Yours ever,  
W. STRANG

<sup>1</sup> Date of filing in the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 250, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> An open-air meeting of the anti-Nazi Einheitsfront supporters had been held at Saarbrücken on January 6; see *The Times*, January 7, p. 12, and S. Wambaugh, *The Saar Plebiscite*, pp. 193, 290-1.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 288-90, 291-2.

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 24)*  
*No. 60 [C 623/55/18]*

BERLIN, January 22, 1935

Sir,

The result of the Saar plebiscite is likely to have a profound effect on the future course of German domestic and foreign policy.

2. At home Herr Hitler's position has been materially strengthened. He has demonstrated that despite his open violation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles and his brusque exit from the League, he has been able to secure the execution of that small portion of the Treaty which Germany desires to see fulfilled. The big majority recorded for Germany proves to his enemies that the day of his eclipse is not at hand, whilst the insignificant number of votes given to France proves M. Clemenceau a liar before history,<sup>1</sup> and confirms, the Chancellor claims, his oft repeated thesis that the Treaty of Versailles is based on a tissue of falsehoods and consequently has no moral value. Finally the victory has come at an opportune moment and the genuine enthusiasm which it has generated will supply the régime with sufficient motive power to carry it forward for some time.

3. The effect on German foreign policy is likely to be equally far-reaching. I fear that, as I indicated in my telegram No. 21<sup>2</sup> and my telegram No. 20 Saving<sup>3</sup> of January 17th, there is every prospect that Herr Hitler, intoxicated by his victory, will become more difficult to treat with on all the major questions at issue before us. The German press significantly greets the Saar result as the 'Victory of Blood'. The unexpectedly large majority for Germany not unnaturally gives rise to the belief that an election in Austria would also show a result exceeding the previous expectations of the most optimistic of the Nazis. Furthermore it leads the National-Socialists to conclude—and perhaps with some truth—that the German minorities in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Tyrol would vote for Hitler to-morrow were they allowed to do so. It is a remarkable fact that at the present moment National-Socialism is more enthusiastic and ardent outside this country than in it.

4. In the matter of disarmament there are indications, which I have already reported,<sup>4</sup> that the German requirements are likely to be assessed at an ever increasing figure. The 'D.A.Z.', in a leading article of January 18th, significantly remarks that the Franco-Russian understanding is a new factor, of which due account will have to be taken. Baron von Neurath said as much to me on the following day in regard to German requirements in the air.

5. Still more unpromising, perhaps, is the outlook for the return of Germany to the League of Nations, whatever certain Wilhelmstrasse officials and

<sup>1</sup> A reference possibly to M. Clemenceau's statement in the Council of Four on March 28, 1919, as reported by A. Tardieu in *La Paix* (Paris, 1921), p. 293, that 'Il y a là 150,000 hommes qui sont des Français'; cf. S. Wambaugh, *The Saar Plebiscite*, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> No. 347.

<sup>3</sup> No. 348.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 355, paragraph 4.

others may say to British visitors. Even if agreement be reached on disarmament and Germany be granted a full measure of equality, with all this term implies, including presumably the militarisation of the Rhine, the removal of the War Guilt clause and, in fact, the consignment to the waste-paper basket of the Treaty of Versailles, not to mention complete equality on sea and in the air, it will probably be no easy matter to lure the German Government back to Geneva. Herr Hitler, in his interview with Mr. Ward Price on January 17th,<sup>5</sup> stated that the return of Germany to the League depends entirely on whether she obtains full equality of rights. This, on the face of it, is a not unpromising declaration despite the qualifications which follow, but I fear that when it comes to the point it will be difficult to overcome the deep and widespread German prejudice against the League of Nations. As I reported at the time, the decision to withdraw was a popular one and for a variety of reasons it will not lightly be reversed. Rightly or wrongly, whether because of the language difficulty, their mental inelasticity or their inability to win the sympathy of an international assembly the Germans were always fish out of water at Geneva. The atmosphere is displeasing to them. They feel enveloped in a cloud of general hostility and suspicion. With the advent to power of Herr Hitler their situation became much more uncomfortable and there are few German officials who would look forward without apprehension to appearing once more in the Salle de la Réformation. For the purpose of gaining advantages for Germany the sacrifice might be made, but the general opinion appears to be that Geneva promises rebuffs rather than solid advantages and that, besides, Germany has already by her own efforts obtained what she requires. As a Serbian patriarch is said to have remarked to the Archbishop of Canterbury: 'For years we prayed for deliverance from the Turks. But at last we took up arms and did it ourselves.' By means of the expansion of German strength, it is believed, more friends will be made than by lobbying behind the scenes at Geneva. This sentiment is reflected, for example, in a press telegram of January 17th from Geneva, which describes the warmth of the welcome given to the Saar representatives after the plebiscite. Never before, says the correspondent, during the past fifteen years had they been received with such courtesy and attention even by the messengers in the Secretariat. Success, he concludes, is what counts at Geneva.

6. Another consideration, which is likely to weigh with Herr Hitler, is that the League is based on the principle of collective security, whereas his policy is directed towards the conclusion of separate bilateral non-aggression pacts. Did he not at one of my first meetings with him declare his readiness to conclude such pacts with all his neighbours?<sup>6</sup> The stronger Germany becomes, the more ready will the limitrophe States be to conclude such agreements with her, and only thus will it be possible to break the ring around her frontiers. This policy is not likely to be abandoned till it has been thoroughly tested and shown to have failed. In his interview with Mr. Ward Price referred to above, Herr Hitler remarks that he will not conclude pacts, the consequences of which cannot be foreseen, and that, if Germany is not

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, note 4.

<sup>6</sup> See Volume VI, Nos. 97 and 114.

prepared to go to war for herself, she will not do so on behalf of foreign interests which do not concern her; and he repeats his readiness to conclude non-aggression pacts with his neighbours. So long as he maintains this attitude, it is difficult to see how Germany can loyally subscribe to the Covenant.

7. Finally, those of Herr Hitler's advisers who predicted that Germany's withdrawal from the League would bring disaster have been discredited. There are today few Germans in any walk of life who, in the light of a year's experience, consider that Germany's interests have in any way suffered from her absence from Geneva. On the other hand those, like Herr von Bülow, who advised Herr Hitler to take the step are more than ever of the same opinion, and their voice is likely to catch the Führer's ear. The manifest desire of Great Britain and other States to see Germany back in the fold only confirms them in their reluctance to return, and in their belief that the League is an instrument for the stabilisation of the *status quo* and the enforcement of the last remnants of the Versailles Treaty.

8. The mood may pass. Economic difficulties, internal strife, the counsel of the moderates may bring about a more prudent frame of mind. But for the moment, I feel it my duty to warn you that the result of the Saar plebiscite has been to render Herr Hitler more independent and the omens less propitious for the success of any negotiations with this country. In all the circumstances it must be greatly regretted that the French Government did not show more foresight and liquidate the Saar question by negotiation with Herr Hitler out of court, as he publicly suggested, and in accordance with the advice of their Ambassador in Berlin.<sup>7</sup>

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*, No. 79.

## No. 362

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 24, 10.35 a.m.)*  
*No. 23 Saving: Telegraphic [C 600/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, *January 23, 1935*

I had a long conversation with the Chancellor last night after the dinner he gave to the foreign Heads of Missions.

2. I opened by remarking that he must be pleased with the result of the Saar plebiscite, to which he replied in a hearty affirmative. He added that if elections were held in Austria tomorrow they would doubtless result in an overwhelming Nazi victory. This brought us to the Austrian Pact and he declared that he had no intention of signing it. He could not bind Germany to any such vague, abstract undertakings. It would be impossible to define the words used therein. He would not, however, mind signing a declaration undertaking to respect the independence of Austria.

3. I then referred to the Eastern Pact and enquired what his views were on that, but here again he declared very definitely that he could not join it.

He was ready to enter into clearly defined, concrete agreements with individual states, but could not contemplate joining such vague and far-reaching pacts which would commit Germany further than it was possible to foresee at the moment of signature. For instance, how could it be imagined that he would consent to attack Poland if the latter Power decided at some future date to attack Russia?

4. I did not conceal my disappointment and urged the Chancellor not to throw away what might be a last opportunity of coming to a satisfactory arrangement with France now that so reasonable a government as the present one was in power. M. Flandin and M. Laval, as he must know better than I, were deeply desirous of reaching a satisfactory understanding with Germany. This Herr Hitler did not deny but maintained that, despite appearances, they were merely one of a series of weak French Governments. In this connexion he referred to the seeming impossibility of reaching any agreement in the matter of an Arms Convention. Poland could not limit her armaments owing to the neighbourhood of Russia who would not limit and could not be trusted even if she did. Germany, in turn, could not do so, nor could France, particularly, as stated above, in view of the weakness of her successive governments. I objected [? suggested] that Russia was in a most pacific mood and most unlikely to attack anybody, as was shown by her attitude towards Japan. This Herr Hitler admitted, but maintained that it was only for a short space, after which Russia would again seek to foment world revolution and strife.

5. The Chancellor here again brought up the question of 'Gleichberechtigung' concerning which I tried to elicit a precise definition but merely succeeded in drawing forth a violent tirade about Memel and a savage attack on Lithuania—that wretched little country, as he described it, that dared to beard 88 millions of Germans. One division of his Reichswehr, he said, could wipe it out. The Germans were constantly being maltreated and beaten.<sup>1</sup> What would we say if an English county had been torn from us and put under some trumpery foreign State? In a lull I urged that we had reason to believe that the Governor of Memel was in a more reasonable mood and that good hopes of a satisfactory compromise existed if only the majority parties in the Landtag were encouraged to accept the proposal for the granting to them of three seats in the Directorate and certain further concessions. My words did not penetrate, however, and seemed literally to fall on the parquet floor.

6. The Chancellor then spoke of Great Britain and of the ease with which it would be possible for Germany to reach an agreement alone with her. The Kaiser's biggest blunder had been to offend us by building a big navy instead of leading the world as he might have done in collaboration with us—(two Powers equal as regards race and culture)—he on land and we at sea. 'Gleichberechtigung' would in this case mean German liberty to discuss freely and negotiate an arrangement with us establishing a certain fixed ratio between our respective fleets.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 230, note 3.



7. Herr Hitler, as he generally does when discussing Anglo-German affairs, here adopted his most persuasive manner. He remarked, whilst disclaiming any wish to mix up in British internal politics, that the Conservative Party would, he thought, do well not to attempt to steal the thunder of their opponents, and to discard so unattainable an object as disarmament from their programme. If he himself had reached his present position, it was merely due to the fact that he had never attempted to adopt his opponents' programme but had ruthlessly pursued his own. I replied that disarmament was a subject that all British parties had equally at heart. I cannot help thinking that when the Chancellor made these last remarks he had in mind the somewhat mysterious mission to Berlin of Lord Allen of Hurtwood<sup>2</sup> who has been having lengthy conversations with Baron von Neurath, with various Wilhelmstrasse officials and others and who will on January 25th be received by the Chancellor himself.<sup>3</sup>

8. Herr Hitler concluded by displaying an almost touching solicitude for the welfare of the British Empire and expressing a fervent hope that India would never be lost to it. That would, he declared, be a catastrophe for the whole civilised world.

9. Finally he expressed himself ready to discuss matters at greater length with me whenever I liked.

<sup>2</sup> Reginald Clifford Allen, created 1st Baron Allen of Hurtwood in 1932, had been treasurer and chairman of the Independent Labour party 1922-6 and director of the *Daily Herald*, 1925-30.

<sup>3</sup> Parts of Lord Allen's account of his interview with Herr Hitler on January 25 are printed in A. Marwick, *Clifford Allen. The Open Conspirator* (Edinburgh, 1964), pp. 160-2. The official German report of the interview is given in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 463. In the course of a private letter to Sir E. Phipps of February 1, Sir R. Vansittart remarked: 'Lord Allen, however charming he may be personally, seems to have been behaving as an unwise busybody, for which of course he has nobody but himself to blame. As you already know, there was never any question of his being entrusted with a mission, however unofficial. The Foreign Office was only told of this matter quite privately by Usher [Mr. H. B. Usher was one of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's personal private secretaries] of No. 10, who having heard that Lord Allen was going to Berlin (they had known one another at Cambridge), expected Lord Allen to ask him various questions about the attitude of His Majesty's Government to Germany in questions of current interest, and wanted to be told beforehand what he should say. [Mr. J. V.] Perowne was authorised to go over to talk to Usher, who quite understood that there was to be no question of Lord Allen realising that Usher had talked to the Foreign Office before seeing him.'

### No. 363

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 24, 10.30 a.m.)*

*No. 25 Saving: Telegraphic [C 601/55/18]*

BERLIN, *January 23, 1935*

My telegram No. 23 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

It will be noticed that the Chancellor, unlike Baron von Neurath (see my telegram No. 25<sup>2</sup> of January 21st), did not pretend that if Great Britain

<sup>1</sup> No. 362.

<sup>2</sup> No. 358.

joined these pacts Germany would also join. In fact throughout our conversation he was franker than the Minister for Foreign Affairs, whose chief task seems to be to administer soothing syrup to the foreign representatives. Herr Hitler's views, on the contrary, seem to be much more in harmony with those expressed to me with cynical frankness by Herr von Bülow, as reported in my telegram No. 21<sup>3</sup> of January 17th.

<sup>3</sup> No. 347.

### No. 364

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 24, 10.10 a.m.)*  
*No. 26 Saving: Telegraphic [C 637/55/18]*

BERLIN, *January 23, 1935*

My telegram No. 23 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

French Ambassador tells me that Chancellor last night said that he would still be ready to discuss an armaments convention but no longer on basis of last Spring for all countries had re-armed since, particularly Russia.

2. Chancellor categorically expressed to French Ambassador his aversion to collective pacts and urged that France should sign a bilateral pact with Germany on the lines of her agreement with Poland,<sup>2</sup> the friendship between Germany and Poland as a result of that agreement was growing stronger every day. When pressed to agree to pacts under auspices of the League he retorted that the League did not prevent Great Britain and France from seeking special agreements with the United States and Japan.

3. To the Italian Ambassador Chancellor declared continually that he would be ready to make a unilateral declaration announcing his intention respecting independence of Austria. But he could not undertake to support a ridiculous Government such as that of Herr Schuschnigg; it was of the same order as the governing commission in the Saar and in the event of elections would only get the support of a maximum 25% of the electorate. 'You would force me to support Schuschnigg but do not ask me to support Laval for very good reason that Austria is not an independent country whereas France is.'

4. Chancellor then remarked excitedly to Italian Ambassador that he was the subject of violent and odious attacks by emigrés in every press apart from that of (? Italy),<sup>3</sup> Hungary and Yugoslav[ia]. Prague was the centre for these attacks. Italian Ambassador replied that was very good reason for joining Austrian pact as it would be reciprocal and may hinder such attacks in the press. Moreover pact would set a seal on reconciliation of Yugoslavia and Hungary which could only be in Germany's interests. Germany would of course make any suggestions in regard to pact she liked for she was not being asked to accept it as it stood.

<sup>1</sup> No. 362.      <sup>2</sup> Of January 26, 1934; cf. No. 1, note 5.

<sup>3</sup> The text is here uncertain.

5. Regarding an arms convention Herr Hitler remarked that for financial reasons he would welcome some rearmament agreement were it not for Russia. Finally Chancellor in reply to appeal by Italian Ambassador consented to join in discussion of Austrian pact by asking eventually for certain elucidations of terms used therein.

6. Herr Hitler took violent objection to the accusations made against him in connexion with Dollfuss's assassination;<sup>4</sup> although he admitted that it had brought about settlement of military revolt he would have welcomed disappearance of such an '(? inactive)'<sup>3</sup> Government in Austria. As it was, however, he had used every possible means to dissociate himself from irresponsible criminals.

On comparing notes we have all derived an unfavourable impression from our respective conversations with Chancellor whose unhelpful attitude must cause a great deal of embarrassment to Baron von Neurath and certain permanent officials.

<sup>4</sup> On July 25, 1934; see Volume VI, No. 530 and Appendix IV.

### No. 365

*Memorandum on preparation for meeting with French Ministers on February 1<sup>st</sup>*  
[C 1048/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 23, 1935*

I am not satisfied that we have carried sufficiently far our preparations for the Anglo-French conversations at the end of next week. They will constitute a most important event and, apart from their possible influence on the future of international affairs and world peace, they will provide an occasion when the Government will either gain further public support in this country for their positive action, or will lose much of what it has recently gained by contributing to the impression that the opportunity (and it may be the last opportunity) has not been effectively used. The leading article in the *Times* of the 12th January is a very good indication of the hopes entertained for some positive result. The annexed Note has been prepared in the Foreign Office during the last few days to indicate the lines which, in our judgment, should be followed. These would involve, as therein indicated, some positive steps being taken immediately and before the French visit actually takes place.

<sup>1</sup> A covering note of January 25 by Sir J. Simon read as follows: 'The annexed paper was printed but was not circulated to the Cabinet, as an immediate consultation between the Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin and myself had to take place upon it yesterday. We reached conclusions for handling the impending discussion with the French, supplementary to those already approved by the Cabinet, following the general lines of this paper, but with some differences of detail. I am circulating it to my other colleagues, not as a Cabinet Paper, but for purposes of information. Telegrams which are being circulated will show exactly the form of the formula proposed.'

I ask therefore for the earliest consideration of what is therein suggested with a view to the action being authorised.

J. S.

ENCLOSURE IN No. 365

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 23, 1935*

It is desirable to prepare the ground with the French beforehand so as to make the meeting on the 1st February a success.

At present we have only asked the French Government 'to make a real and realistic contribution' and not to say anything about joint military consultations.<sup>2</sup> We have asked the Embassy to find out on what lines the French are working (Sir George Clerk in a private letter<sup>3</sup> has said that they have not any ideas at present) but we have given the Embassy no indication that we ourselves have any policy.

The French, being as anxious as ourselves to make the London meeting a success, will probably ask us shortly what our ideas are. We ought to be in a position to answer them.

There are two ways of doing this. We can either state generally what our objective is—namely, the return of Germany to the League in return for some limitation of Germany's armaments—without indicating the ways and means of reaching this objective. Or else we can straight away put in the form of a formula what we hope the London meeting will produce in the way of concrete results.

The latter method is recommended as being more conducive to clear thinking, in view of the shortness of time before the meeting.

The formula which has been suggested is as follows:—

'H.M. Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the French Republic are agreed that neither Germany, nor any other Power whose armaments have been defined by the Peace Treaties, can by unilateral action modify those obligations.

'But H.M. Government and the French Government declare that they are willing for their part that the armament clauses in Part V of the Treaty of Versailles shall be abrogated as soon as Germany has agreed to such provisions with regard to her armaments and the maintenance of security as may be settled on a basis of equality by free negotiation carried on between Germany and other parties to the Treaty of Versailles; and as soon as Germany has cancelled the notice of her intention to withdraw from the League of Nations and has expressed her intention to resume active membership of the League.

'They further declare that they are willing that the corresponding provisions of the Treaties of Saint-Germain, Neuilly and Trianon shall be abrogated as soon as Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria, remaining active members of the League, agree to such provisions with regard to their armaments and the maintenance of security as may be settled on the basis

<sup>2</sup> See No. 359.

<sup>3</sup> Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

of equality by free negotiation carried on between them and the other parties to the peace treaties aforesaid.

'H.M. Government and the French Government invite the Governments of the other signatories of the Treaty of Versailles to accede to the present declaration.'

It is suggested that this formula should be communicated privately to the French forthwith, with the suggestion that it should be taken as a basis of the London discussions and if possible should emerge as the published conclusion of these discussions.

If possible it would be highly desirable that the actual text of the formula should be agreed upon privately between ourselves and the French before the meeting.

The actual meeting would then be devoted to considering with the French the provisions regarding armaments and security referred to in the formula. This in itself opens up three definite problems.

*Problem No. 1.* We and the French will have to agree on the maxima in armaments which we will be prepared in subsequent negotiations to allow Germany to reach. This has already been dealt with by the Committee of the Chiefs of Staff and the Foreign Office, and their report will be available in the next day or two.<sup>4</sup>

*Problem No. 2.* The French will demand contributions towards security both from Germany and from ourselves.

We may expect that the Embassy will in the course of the next few days give us the present views of the French Government.

Our own ideas, including our own possible contributions, have been examined by the Cabinet, and are set out in C.P. 19 (35).<sup>5</sup>

*Problem No. 3.* The French, although they have been told not to discuss the possibility of military consultations, will nevertheless urge that there must be some agreement as to the strength at which Great Britain and France will in future maintain their armaments, taking into account the armaments which are now to be allowed to Germany.

This question has not been considered.

Another question which will have to be discussed at the London meeting is that of future tactics and procedure. Assuming that we reach agreement as regards policy and objectives on the lines of the formula above mentioned, how are we going to approach the Germans? And at what stage are the Italians to be brought in? (There is also the question of bringing in the U.S. inasmuch as they also are parties to Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.)<sup>6</sup>

We must face the fact that this plan is not going to be very palatable to the French. M. Laval has already got wind of it and warned Mr. Eden on the subject (see Geneva telegram No. 19 of the 15th January).<sup>7</sup> The fact is that M. Flandin's internal position is none too strong and that, whatever goodwill he may have, he is bound to have difficulties both with his colleagues in the Cabinet, and with a large section of the press and the Chamber.

<sup>4</sup> This was evidently a reference to No. 372 below.

<sup>5</sup> No. 366 below.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 134.

<sup>7</sup> No. 341.

In order to ease his position, therefore, it is suggested that we should in return offer him, before the London meeting, a public declaration to the effect:—

- (a) That we associate ourselves with the Franco-Italian declaration of co-operation made in Rome.
- (b) That we approve the Italo-French view regarding unilateral repudiation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. (We had already told the Germans privately that this was our view some time before the Rome meeting.)<sup>8</sup>
- (c) That we wish to take part in the consultations regarding Austria provided for in the Franco-Italian agreement concluded at Rome. (The French and Italians have already been told this privately.)

None of these three statements would represent any fresh commitment. Their value lies merely in the fact of their being made public at this particular moment.

Their publication, too, would be desirable from the German point of view, since there are several indications that German policy is rapidly crystallising, and that the silence of H.M. Government as regards the Rome agreements may be encouraging Hitler to draw erroneous conclusions.

Lastly, there is to be an important Nazi meeting on the 30th January, and it is quite possible that Hitler may be planning some pronouncement on foreign affairs on that occasion. It is desirable, therefore, that we should make it clear beforehand exactly where we stand.<sup>9</sup>

The proposed declaration could appear in a note to the French and Italian Embassies acknowledging the communication of the authoritative texts of the Rome agreements. This note would be made public before arrival of the French Ministers in London.

O. G. SARGENT

<sup>8</sup> See No. 302, enclosure. This sentence, and the corresponding sentence in parentheses in sub-section (c) below, were not in the original Note signed by Mr. Sargent and here printed but they were included in the Note as printed for the Cabinet (see note 1 above) which was unsigned.

<sup>9</sup> The original Note ended here. The next paragraph was in the Note as printed for the Cabinet.

## No. 366

### *Material for impending discussions with French Ministers<sup>1</sup>*

[C 866/55/18]

*January 24, 1935*

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a Memorandum to the Cabinet (C.P. 6 (35)), dated the 9th January, 1935, submitted a series of

<sup>1</sup> This note was circulated to the Cabinet 'by direction of the Prime Minister', as C.P. 19 (35): only the copy as printed for the Cabinet is preserved in Foreign Office archives. It was stated to contain information 'based on C.P. 6 (35) as amended by the Cabinet at their meeting held on January 10 [?14], 1935 (Cabinet 3 (35), conclusion 1)'; cf. No. 359, note 2.

propositions for Cabinet authorisation which contained the essential suggestions in C.P. 302 (34).<sup>2</sup> The Cabinet, at their meeting held on the 14th January, 1935 (Cabinet 3 (35), conclusion 1), approved paragraphs 2-7 of C.P. 6 (35) and also recorded certain conclusions on the subject of general security and possible British contributions thereto. The material in the form approved by the Cabinet for the impending discussions with French Ministers is contained in the ensuing paragraphs, numbers 2-7 of which contain the substance of C.P. 6 (35) in the form attached as an Appendix to Cabinet 3 (35).

2. It will be agreed, in the first place, that this is not a case for hard and fast instructions, and that a good deal of flexibility must be allowed to Ministers conducting the discussions. We can only speculate as to the line which our French visitors are likely to wish to follow, and, if new matters of great importance emerge, it will, of course, always be possible to discuss them on the basis that final decisions must be reserved for the Cabinet as a whole.

3. We shall naturally begin with some reference to Sir John Simon's interview of the 22nd December<sup>3</sup> and to the Franco-Italian agreement reached at Rome. As regards the former, it will be useful to note that French Ministers have recognised that the position taken up in the French note of the 17th April can no longer be maintained. We shall have to point out that, in the interval Germany has not stood still, and that it is therefore to be expected that any proposal for recognising the existing limit of armaments reached in Germany will involve something more than was contained in the German document of the 16th April.

4. The relevant passage in the Franco-Italian agreements reached at Rome is to the following effect:

The Italian and French Governments, referring to the Declaration of Equality of Rights of the 11th December, 1932, have found themselves in agreement in their recognition that no country can modify by unilateral act its obligations in the matter of armaments, and that in the case of this eventuality being established they should consult each other.<sup>4</sup>

We should inform the French Government that we had already taken up with the German Government a similar attitude, though we had not previously published the fact. After the House of Commons' Debate of the 28th November, 1934, and our communication to the German Government as to our information on German rearmament, we felt bound to make it clear to the German Government that they must not assume that we considered the Disarmament Clauses of Part V as no longer binding. We therefore told them that His Majesty's Government do not recognise the right of any signatory to a Treaty to free itself from the obligations imposed upon it without negotiation and agreement with the other signatories.<sup>5</sup>

5. After these preliminaries, our main line with French Ministers must be that it is worse than useless to allow the existing situation to drift. Germany

<sup>2</sup> This report of December 18, 1934, by the Committee on German Rearmament is not printed; cf. paragraph 5 below.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 311.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 328, enclosure.

<sup>5</sup> See Nos. 293 and 302.

is, in fact, increasing her armaments, and the facts must be faced and dealt with in the only practicable way. It is impracticable to expect Germany to scrap what she is in process of building up in regard to armaments in order that a fresh start might be made in a new agreement. We must deal with the German situation as it is to-day, bearing in mind that the return of Germany to the League and to the Disarmament Conference is essential for the establishment and maintenance of peace in Europe. We should put forward the view that while we do not in any way condone Germany's action in leaving the League, we can conceive of no real basis for the establishment and maintenance of peace in Europe so long as Germany remains outside. We do not question the illegality of Germany's rearmament in breach of the Treaty, but the stage has been reached when its recognition has become inevitable. We should press strongly the point that it is far better that this rearmament should be controlled than that it should remain uncontrolled. To the objection which the French may raise that this concession amounts to condoning illegality and surrendering to what they may describe as blackmail, we should ask the French Ministers whether they have a practicable alternative. We should point out that Germany has already demanded, and will continue to demand, equality of rights. It may be that she will not be content with the idea of the *status quo* as far as she is concerned. But we should seek a basis for negotiation which would recognise nothing beyond what has already been done. A further increase in Germany's arms strength necessarily raises new questions as to the security of others. If the French raise the question of action under Article 213 of the Treaty of Versailles, we should point out that it would appear extremely unlikely that this article could be enforced. On the other hand, if we can once get a new basis for negotiation and a prospect of agreement, Germany might be expected to take up a different attitude to a system of inspection or to a system of supervision agreed to as part of a convention about armaments, provided that it is of general application to all countries.

(The contents of this paragraph are in effect a summary taken from paragraph 3 of C.P. 302 (34) to which the Cabinet gave approval on the 9th January, 1935.)

6. French Ministers may certainly be expected, in reply to the above, to raise the question of 'security' and to insist that the agreement of France to equality of rights was conditioned, by the terms of the document of the 11th December, 1932, by the phrase 'in a system which would provide security for all nations.' We must therefore expect to be asked what proposals we have to make to satisfy this condition. Again, we must expect to have placed before us by French Ministers proposals of their own on this subject.

7. On the topic of security we should first emphasise that the accommodation which we are seeking to bring about with Germany is not designed specially for our benefit and not advocated from any willingness to prejudice the French position. Our conviction is that such an accommodation is



needed in the general interests of Europe and is just as much essential to the position of France as to anyone else. We are not asking France to make sacrifices in our interest for which some special compensation is required, any more than our recent contribution of troops to police the Saar was specially in the interests of France and called for a *quid pro quo*. In both cases it is the general pacification of Europe which is in question, and in that matter we are all equally interested. The longer we all hesitate to take the bold action which is now so urgently called for, the worse the situation will get for all of us and the less chance there will be of getting a contribution towards agreement from Germany. Moreover, we have announced a programme of rearmament, especially in the air,<sup>6</sup> and are therefore already burdening ourselves with what amounts to a more material contribution from which the Locarno Powers gain advantage.

8. On this subject of general security and the possible British contributions thereto, the British representatives should be authorised (subject to a good deal of flexibility being allowed to them in the conduct of the discussions) to proceed, in so far as circumstances render this necessary and desirable, on the following lines:

- (a) That, as a counter to French demands for a contribution on our part towards general security and in return for some important advance on the part of French Ministers, the British representatives might consent to accept inspection and supervision of armaments as part of any scheme of disarmament that might result from the present negotiations. This great concession, however, should not be made too readily or without emphasising that it involves the surrender of a principle to which we attach the greatest importance.
- (b) That, since we had already indicated general approval to the Rome Agreement, we could undertake to support the French in any way we could to bring about the adherence of Germany to the proposed multi-lateral non-interference pact in Central Europe agreed upon at Rome.
- (c) That we could support the French effort, to which we were already committed, to secure the adherence of Germany and Poland to the proposed Eastern Pact, but that the British negotiators should not allow themselves to be persuaded that this was an essential part of the negotiations with Germany.
- (d) That an expression could be made of our readiness in principle to support a proposal, if advanced by French Ministers, that Germany should be pressed to conclude non-aggression pacts with her neighbours in accordance with the offer made by Herr Hitler last year.<sup>7</sup>
- (e) That no attempt should be made for a redefinition of our obligations under Locarno. If the French Ministers should make proposals to 'put teeth into Locarno,' the British negotiators should make it clear that it was necessary to carry British public opinion, and that from this

<sup>6</sup> See 292 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 1275, and 295 *ibid.*, cols. 877 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Volume VI, Nos. 114, 431-2.

point of view it was necessary to avoid any actual reference to that Treaty. They would prefer to deal with the question from the point of view of our own vital interests, and to link up any further declaration to the public declaration we had already made as to the importance of Belgium from the point of view of British security.<sup>8</sup> This, however, would also inure to the benefit of France.

- (f) That the negotiators should avoid a statement that Great Britain considers the demilitarisation of the Rhineland as a vital interest. If French Ministers should raise the question of the demilitarisation of the Rhineland, the British negotiators should be authorised to state that we were bound by the Locarno Treaty and had no intention of repudiating it.
- (g) That the British negotiators should be authorised, if they found it necessary and desirable, to make a declaration to the effect that Great Britain would consider any attempt to interfere with the independence or integrity of Belgium as dangerous to her peace and security. The question of including Holland should not be raised by British Ministers at the conversations.

9. His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris has been asked to find means to let the French Government know that it would be preferable that the question of regular consultations between the General Staffs of Great Britain, France and Belgium should be strictly avoided at the forthcoming meeting.<sup>9</sup> Such consultations would be inconsistent with our present policy of bringing the Germans back to Geneva; and our public opinion is not yet ripe for the Government to agree to their taking place. In these circumstances, a French proposal for such consultations would be quite premature at present; and we should be obliged to resist the suggestion at once.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 26, note 3.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. No. 359.

## No. 367

*Record by Mr. Eden<sup>1</sup> of a conversation with M. Benes*

[C 670/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 24, 1935*

I had a conversation with M. Benes on Monday, the 21st January, before his departure from Geneva.

M. Benes spoke of the significance of the Rome Pact and of the Eastern Pact. He was a little anxious lest Germany should sign the Rome Pact and maintain that, having done this, she need not sign the Eastern Pact. Her signature to the latter instrument was of infinitely greater importance. Whether Germany signed the Rome Pact or no, that instrument would be operative as between those who did sign it, but in respect of the Eastern Pact

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden left Geneva on January 21 at the close of the 84th session of the Council of the League of Nations.

Germany's signature was indispensable. Without such signature, the Pact would become an alliance between those who signed it.

M. Benes shared the anxiety, which I found almost universally held in Geneva, as to the effect upon German policy of Hitler's overwhelming majority in the Saar. Germans are not generally most tractable in the hour of triumph. M. Benes, however, found a measure of comfort in the reflection that the third Reich would soon come to an end, and they would soon be back in the second Reich. By this he meant apparently that the military authorities were becoming increasingly powerful in Germany and that before long Hitler himself would be little else than a hostage in their hands. The greater the influence of the military and financial interests in Germany, the wiser would Germany's foreign policy be. By this M. Benes did not mean that their motives would be different from those of the National Socialists but only that, being wiser, they would be more careful not to provoke foreign opinion unduly until Germany had sufficiently strengthened her position.

M. Benes then went on to speak of the conversations in London, and I asked him for a frank expression of the outcome he would like to see. M. Benes made it clear that in his view the fate of the Eastern Pact is the key to the immediate future of Europe. If Germany will sign the Eastern Pact—in detail it might be modified but its main lines should stand—then a disarmament agreement could be negotiated and Germany take her place once again at Geneva. Without the signature of the Eastern Pact no arms agreement was possible. M. Benes therefore hoped that, as a result of the London conversations with the French Ministers, there might be agreement upon some declaration in respect of arms similar to that entered into between French and Italian Ministers in Rome,<sup>2</sup> and also some re-affirmation by the two parties of the essential need for the acceptance by Germany and Poland of the Eastern Pact.

Perhaps this is the appropriate moment to set down my personal impression, gleaned from all the conversations I have had at Geneva, that it would not be possible for any French Government to agree to legalise German rearmament unless as part of that agreement Germany adhered to the Eastern Pact and undertook to return to Geneva.

A. E.

<sup>2</sup> On January 7, 1935; cf. No. 328, enclosure.

### No. 368

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 17 Saving: Telegraphic [C 655/55/18]<sup>1</sup>*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 25, 1935*

1. The two days allowed for the discussion here with the French Ministers are a very brief period; and unless the object of the meeting is defined in

<sup>1</sup> Only the approved draft of this telegram has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

general terms in advance, we fear that it will be difficult to ensure not merely that this short period is used to the best advantage but that any concrete result emerges from the meeting. Any failure to produce a concrete result would almost certainly strengthen the uncompromising and dangerous spirit which appears to have gained ground in Germany since the Saar plebiscite, and cause considerable disappointment elsewhere.

2. You will recollect that a general scheme of work was available and communicated before the Rome meeting;<sup>2</sup> and we desire in some degree to follow that precedent.

3. My immediately following telegram<sup>3</sup> contains the text of a draft formula which we think might be taken as a basis for the London discussions and which, if possible, might emerge in its approved form as their published conclusion.

I request that you will quite informally bring this draft formula to the notice of M. Flandin and M. Laval in whatever way you think best, giving an explanation in the sense of the preceding paragraphs.

4. You should point out that the contents of this draft formula do not, in effect, go beyond what was contained in the Declaration of December 11th, 1932,<sup>4</sup> the United Kingdom Draft Convention of March 1933<sup>5</sup> and subsequent developments. In these circumstances we cannot see that the French Government should have any serious objection to urge against it. It is certainly useless to expect the German Government to pay more than what it contains for the cancellation of the armament clauses of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles; and at this late date we consider that it will be most difficult to secure even this.

5. If you find that the French Ministers are generally in agreement with the draft formula and the preceding explanations (but not otherwise) you may tell them that His Majesty's Government think it would be well that *before* the conversations begin, His Majesty's Government should publicly announce (1) that they cordially welcome the declaration by which in the Rome Agreements the French and Italian Governments assert their intention to develop the traditional friendship which unites the two nations; and that His Majesty's Government associate themselves with the intention of the French and Italian Governments to collaborate in a spirit of mutual trust in the maintenance of general peace;

(2) that His Majesty's Government agree in recognising that no country is entitled to modify by unilateral action its treaty obligations in regard to armaments. (They had already before the conclusion of the Rome Agreement privately so informed the German Government.)<sup>6</sup>

(3) that in publicly conveying their congratulations to the two Governments on the conclusion of the Rome Agreement about Austria, H.M.G. wish to add that, as a consequence of the declarations made by them in conjunction with the French and Italian Governments on February 17 and Septem-

<sup>2</sup> See No. 311.

<sup>3</sup> No. 369

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Volume IV, No. 220, enclosure.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 48, note 4.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Nos. 293 and 302.

ber 27 last, they consider themselves to be among the Powers which will, as provided in the Rome Agreement, consult together if the independence and integrity of Austria are menaced.

Such an announcement seems particularly desirable in view of the forthcoming Nazi meeting at Berlin on January 30 at which Herr Hitler may make some declaration as to Germany's foreign policy. But we do not intend to make this announcement *before* the Anglo-French meeting unless the French meet us about the draft formula.

6. You will observe that the draft formula is expressed in somewhat general terms, and we consider that this is advisable both in order to secure wider assent to the formula itself and in order to satisfy our own public that we are not merely dictating to Germany. But you may assure French Ministers that as regards such matters as Franco-Italian scheme regarding Austria and a proposed Eastern Pact, H.M.G. remain of the opinion which they have already expressed, and have every intention of supporting such proposals in any way which is best calculated to advance the general settlement which is contemplated. But it must be realised that even if Hitler is prepared to give some assurance regarding Austria, he firmly refuses to accede to the proposed Eastern Pact in its present form as a mutual guarantee treaty. Have the French Govt. any alternative to propose to Germany?

7. As regards the points raised by M. Flandin as noted in Mr. Harvey's memorandum of January 25th (see my despatch No. 224),<sup>7</sup> we are strongly of opinion that most of these will be best treated in discussion when we meet in London. You have already warned French Ministers of the unfortunate consequences if questions had to be answered in Parliament showing that consultation between our General Staffs was one of the matters raised and rejected; and we are confident that the wisest course is not to raise it at this juncture. But as regards other points, we well understand the importance which the French Government attach to them and believe that great advantage will be gained from confidential discussion. You should not make any new promise as to what we can do, but you may convey the impression that on some, though not on all, the matters mentioned in Mr. Harvey's memorandum we hope to be able to go some considerable way to meet their view.

8. As soon as I know that you are making this communication to the French Government I propose to find means to keep the Italian Government informed of what is happening.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. No. 371 below, note 1.

No. 369

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 18 Saving: Telegraphic [C 655/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 25, 1935, 3.15 p.m.*

Following is formula mentioned in my immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>  
Begins—

The object of the meeting with the French President of the Council of Ministers and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs which has just been concluded was, by a continuance of the procedure so happily begun in Rome in the early days of the year, to promote the peace of the world by a closer co-operation between all the European Powers on the basis of the recognition of interests and rights which are common to every one of them.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the French Republic are agreed that neither Germany nor any other Power whose armaments have been defined by the Peace Treaties is entitled by unilateral action to modify those obligations. But, recalling the principle of equality of rights, as defined by the declaration of December 11, 1932, they declare that they are willing for their part that those provisions of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles which at present limit the arms and armed forces of Germany shall be abrogated as part of a general settlement containing such provisions with regard to armaments and the maintenance of security as may be settled by free negotiation carried on between Germany and other parties to the Treaty of Versailles; provided that as part of such a settlement Germany cancels the notice of her intention to withdraw from the League of Nations and expresses her intention to resume active membership of the League.

His Majesty's Government and the French Government trust that the other Governments concerned may share these views.

<sup>1</sup> No. 368.

No. 370

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 26, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 27 Saving: Telegraphic [C 677/55/18]*

BERLIN, *January 25, 1935*

Italian Ambassador tells me that he learns from German Ambassador in Rome who is now in Berlin as follows:

1. Eastern Pact. Chancellor will never join this.
2. Armaments convention. The whole basis on which this could have been concluded is entirely changed for Germans maintain that Soviet army numbers  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million men not to mention the enormous number of aeroplanes.

3. Danubian Pact. Chancellor may eventually sign this but only after asking many questions and demanding certain modifications.

From another source I hear that certain high officials in Ministry of Foreign Affairs favour public announcement by German government declaring their willingness to join Danubian Pact under certain conditions, this announcement to be made before French visit to London.<sup>1</sup>

Repeated to Rome telegram No. 5 Saving.

<sup>1</sup> A minute by Mr. R. L. Speaight of January 31 said: 'In a speech reported in the press to-day the Soviet Vice-Commissar for Defence admits that the Red Army has already increased to 940,000, exclusive of auxiliaries—so the inclusive estimate of 1½ millions is not so far out.'

## No. 371

### *Memorandum by Mr. Harvey<sup>1</sup> on French Desiderata for the London Discussions*

[C 655/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 25, 1935*

During M. Laval's absence at Geneva, it was not possible for the Embassy to take any soundings usefully on the subject of disarmament. When the Ambassador saw M. Laval immediately on his return, the latter told him that he had not yet formulated his views and was studying the dossier.<sup>2</sup>

2. Mr. Campbell met M. Flandin at dinner on Tuesday,<sup>3</sup> when the latter implied that he was ready to agree to almost anything provided that H.M. Government could assure him of immediate military assistance in case of need. M. Flandin was very impressed with the likelihood that the next war would be quite different from the last; that an aggressor would be obliged to have recourse to the most rapid and terroristic methods possible so that his opponent might be crushed before he had opportunity of retaliating. In such circumstances Locarno would be useless if it involved discussion at Geneva before action could be taken. M. Flandin said that the French Government must know that H.M. Government would go immediately to their help and in exactly what way.

3. Mr. Campbell was so impressed with the conversation that in agreement with the Ambassador he arranged to see M. Flandin privately next day in order to question him more closely. He then found him a good deal stiffer,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oliver Harvey, First Secretary in H.M. Embassy at Paris, was in London at this time. A copy of his memorandum was sent to Paris as enclosure in Foreign Office despatch No. 224 of January 25.

<sup>2</sup> No record of this conversation between Sir G. Clerk and M. Laval has been traced in Foreign Office archives; cf. No. 365, second paragraph of enclosure.

<sup>3</sup> January 22. No other records of this conversation and of the interviews on the following day (see paragraphs 3-9 below) appear to have been received in the Foreign Office.

apparently as a result of the Cabinet meeting. M. Flandin said that M. Herriot and M. Marin<sup>4</sup> were both almost irreconcilable to *any* form of agreement with Germany. When pressed to be more explicit, he was reluctant to commit himself before next Tuesday<sup>5</sup> as memoranda were being prepared. Speaking *personally*, however, he said he would be prepared to replace Part V of the Treaty of Versailles by some limitation agreement, on three conditions:—

- (i) German accession to the Central European and Eastern Pacts.
- (ii) France to be afforded a margin of superiority over Germany in both *men and material*.
- (iii) Adequate guarantees of execution with automatic supervision on an international basis plus agreement with H.M. Government (as already indicated) as to the exact form and time of assistance to be furnished by them.

4. Mr. Campbell naturally represented to M. Flandin that condition (ii) appeared to be a retrogression from the previous position and enquired where equality came in. M. Flandin said he was prepared to put into the convention whatever we liked *always provided* that in practice French superiority was preserved for the reason that absolute equality with Germany would mean French inferiority owing to the German reserve in man-power and capacity of output. He added that he had Italian concurrence in that.<sup>6</sup>

5. Mr. Campbell warned M. Flandin that there was absolutely nothing doing in London on the lines of a military agreement.<sup>7</sup> M. Flandin said that he was quite prepared that any such military agreement by H.M.G. should apply to Germany. France would never be an aggressor, and he saw no objections to plans being drawn up by us with the German General Staff as well as with the French Staff.

6. M. Flandin went on to say that he understood the British difficulties about defining aggression and he only asked us to stand by Locarno and the Covenant (to be completed and brought up to date by agreements as above).

7. M. Flandin said that pressure was being brought to bear on him to increase military service to two years at once, but he did not want to do so. If assured of the French margin of superiority, he was ready to reduce it to any level of men or material.

8. Mr. Campbell pointed out the danger of a renewed race in armaments, which M. Flandin did not dispute, but said that it was, as ever, a question of French superiority. The French Government felt that unless such conditions as these could be obtained they would be more secure by standing fast and strengthening their alliances and making a definite arrangement with Russia. M. Flandin asked if H.M.G. were prepared to give Germany parity at sea.

<sup>4</sup> Minister of State without portfolio.

<sup>5</sup> January 29.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. third paragraph of Franco-Italian protocol of January 7; see No. 328, enclosure.

<sup>7</sup> In the Confidential Print copy of this memorandum this passage read: 'Mr Campbell warned M. Flandin, in the sense of his instructions from London [see No. 359], that he should not raise and see rejected in London the question of an agreement between the General Staffs.'



9. Mr. Campbell also saw M. Massigli (although he was not able to discuss with him M. Flandin's conversation which was strictly confidential): but he confirmed the general impression. M. Massigli read out a telegram from the French Ambassador at Berlin who had asked Herr Hitler at the Diplomatic Banquet if he were still in favour of a Convention; he said 'yes'; he then asked him if at the same figures as last year, to which Hitler said: 'Certainly not.' M. Massigli said that France had left the position she had taken up in the Barthou note of April 17th which refused to discuss anything, and that she would now put forward her conditions. He personally was pessimistic as to the prospects of the London conversations but wondered whether, failing anything less [?else], agreement might be possible on an Air Convention. He recommended in any case that the Henderson plan<sup>8</sup> should be proceeded with.<sup>9</sup> M. Massigli said that the acceptance of Germany's terms would mean rearming for three-quarters of the Powers in Europe.

10. The German Ambassador in Paris has adopted since the Saar decision an increasingly aggressive attitude, and lets it be understood that Germany will now agree to nothing unless she is paid for it; he is also mentioning the question of the Colonies as one which is likely to be raised.

11. The Little Entente and the Soviet Government through M. Litvinov now appear to constitute practically a single bloc in bringing pressure to bear on the French Government. M. Flandin himself has now appointed as Secretary-General of his new Department for the Presidency of the Council, M. Noël, who is actually the French Minister at Prague. This has undoubtedly led to stiffening in his attitude on the question.

12. M. Flandin, in his conversation with Mr. Campbell, incidentally intimated that he was likely to raise the question of stabilisation when he was in London.

OLIVER HARVEY

<sup>8</sup> The reference appears to be to the Resolution adopted by the General Commission of the Disarmament Conference, under the presidency of Mr. A. Henderson, on June 8, 1934; see Volume VI, No. 445.

<sup>9</sup> This sentence was omitted in the Confidential Print copy of this memorandum and replaced by: 'I am inclined to think that if the British assistance to France took the form of aircraft instead of land forces, this would satisfy France, who might guarantee us, in return, similar assistance against a German attack. In fact, M. Massigli might be thinking of a mutual Air Guarantee Treaty.'

*Forthcoming Conference with the French Prime Minister and  
Foreign Minister*

[C 876/55/18]

*Report prepared by the Foreign Office and the three Defence  
Services on the Strength of the German Armed Forces<sup>1</sup>*

*Secret*

*January 25, 1935*

*Introduction*

1. With the authority of the Lord President of the Council (in the absence of the Prime Minister) a Conference was held, with Sir Maurice Hankey in the Chair, at 2, Whitehall Gardens, on Thursday, the 17th January, 1935, which was attended by Sir Robert Vansittart, the First Sea Lord, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the Chief of the Air Staff, and their technical representatives, for the purpose of formulating definite ideas in respect of the maximum armed forces of all kinds to which, *having regard to our own security*, we would be prepared to agree that the Germans should attain, if by so doing we could secure a general settlement.

2. In order to assist the three Defence Departments in their consideration of this matter, certain general principles had been suggested by the Foreign Office,<sup>2</sup> which were accepted by the Conference as a basis for their work in the following form:—

- (a) The ultimate objective in aiming at a general settlement (of which the first step is the conversations with France to begin on the 1st February, 1935) is the return of Germany to the League and her participation in an Armaments Convention.
- (b) Our objective in any Armaments Convention must now be numerical limitation rather than reduction, but we should aim at some form of qualitative reduction where applicable.
- (c) Any such Convention might include—
  - (i) Supervision.
  - (ii) Budgetary publicity.
  - (iii) Control of trade in and manufacture of arms as far as possible on existing British lines.

(In connection with (i), however, the three Chiefs of Staff stated that they maintained their objection to supervision, although they understood that the Cabinet had now decided in certain circumstances to agree to it in principle.)

- (d) So far as the limitation of armaments is concerned, it is proposed to open negotiations on the basis of Germany's armaments at the strength put forward in the Note of Germany's requirements dated the 16th April, 1934 (*vide* Cmd. 4559, page 18).

<sup>1</sup> This Report was circulated to the Cabinet as C.P. 23 (35): only the copy as printed for the Cabinet is preserved in Foreign Office archives. Cf. No. 340, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 340.

(It is not, however, expected that Germany will now be agreeable to be limited to these figures, but will probably place her demands considerably higher, especially in the Air.)

### *Naval Limitations*

3. As regards the Navy, the Admiralty were asked by the Chairman to put forward proposals as to the size of the German Navy, both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view, particularly in relation to existing or proposed naval treaties and the question of Germany's participation in those treaties.

4. It was explained that the Foreign Office and the Admiralty had prepared a joint document dealing with the situation as a result of the Naval Conversations with the United States and Japan, and making recommendations as to procedure for future negotiations with the various European Powers (N.C.M. (35) 46).<sup>3</sup> In this Paper the view was expressed that, as far as could be seen at present, the hopes of achieving world agreement as to the size of navies were extremely slender. It was further explained that the proposals which had been finally put before Japan and the United States were on a basis quite different from that on which the Washington and London Naval Treaties had been negotiated. It was now proposed not to attempt at present to lay down any sizes for the various navies, but, on the basis of accepting equality of status between the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom, each country should make a voluntary declaration of its programmes of construction over a period of six years from 1937 to 1942, inclusive.

5. It was also pointed out that the question of naval armaments was a world question, whereas the question of Germany in particular was a European question, and the situation had developed on lines that had not been expected. There would have to be a Naval Conference this year, probably in the Autumn, in accordance with the provisions of the Washington Treaty, and it was extremely desirable that any prospects of agreement at this Conference should not be prejudiced owing to differences of opinion in Europe on other than Naval matters. If the question of German naval armaments was to be tied up with the question of general agreement with Germany, there might be grave risk of this happening. Attention was also drawn to the fact that France had clearly intimated that she was unwilling to attend any Naval Conference unless Germany was included, and, furthermore, that the French were anxious to widen the scope of such a Conference even further at some stage and include the important lesser Naval Powers.

6. From this it would appear that naval negotiations with France would be impossible until the German requirements were known, and, if this were so, the first step ought obviously to be a consultation with Germany. Having regard to our experience with Japan, it would be extremely unwise to open the proceedings by asking Germany what would be the minimum size of Navy she desired. It would be a deliberate incitement to Germany to place

<sup>3</sup> This document will be printed in Volume XIII of this Series, which will deal with the naval conference of December 1935–March 1936, and preliminary discussions relating thereto since July 1934.

her demands at a very high level, which might have the effect of frightening French opinion and thereby prejudicing the whole negotiations.

7. It was considered wiser on all grounds, therefore, to approach Germany on lines similar to those on which we approached Japan. This procedure would have the further advantage of bringing Germany down to the practical financial issues inseparable from any naval programme. It is proposed, therefore, that Germany should be asked what would be her building programme over the six years 1937-42, it being made clear to the German Government that this was done without prejudice to the present validity of the naval clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, and to any general conditions which the ex-Allied Governments may wish to make in return for the application in practice of the principle regarding equality of rights laid down in the Declaration of the 11th December, 1932.<sup>4</sup> It is considered that Germany would be unlikely to put forward any programme for this period which she would be unable, in practice, to realise, and therefore it was hoped that her proposals would be on a moderate scale.

8. The particular question of the size of the German Navy had been discussed with the French last July,<sup>5</sup> and the Admiralty had formulated the following suggestions as to the size of the German Fleet. It is not suggested that this size should be made public or should be discussed with Germany, but it was known to the French, and there would be no harm, therefore, in discussing it with them on this basis. By the Treaty of Versailles Germany was allowed a tonnage for her naval forces of 108,000 tons (or, as increased by the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors, 144,000 tons). Under the Admiralty proposals given below, a total tonnage of 178,000 tons was proposed. The actual details of this tonnage are as follows:—

Category	Number	Tonnage
Capital ships . . . . .	3 Deutschlands, plus 2 others of 25,000 tons	80,000
Aircraft Carrier . . . . .	1 . . . . .	22,000
Cruisers (a) . . . . .	Nil . . . . .	Nil
Cruisers (b) . . . . .	7 . . . . .	44,000
Destroyers and Leaders . . . . .	16 of 800 tons . . . . . + 8 of 1,500 tons . . . . . + 1 of 1,850 tons . . . . .	27,000
Submarines . . . . .	. . . . .	5,000
		178,000

9. It might be that Germany would wish to construct ships to correspond with the French 'Dunkerques.' It would be possible for her to do this under the arrangements suggested above, and we could raise no serious objection. It is also understood that Germany would prefer her Fleet to be based on a percentage of ours and not on the French Navy, a figure of approximately 35 per cent. having been mentioned, though it is understood a lesser per-

<sup>4</sup> Volume IV, No. 220, enclosure.

<sup>5</sup> See Volume VI, Nos. 489 and 490.

centage would be accepted. In July, when this matter was discussed with the French, they had not demurred to our suggestions in the above table, although they had intimated that they regarded the increase we proposed to the German Fleet as large.

10. The view of the Conference may be summarised as follows. In any negotiations with Germany, the object in view is primarily to get such agreement as will make it possible for Germany and France and other European countries concerned to attend the Naval Conference which must be held this year; that we should not attempt to ask Germany for any final programme as to the size of her Navy, but should ask her to suggest a naval construction programme covering the six years 1937-42, subject to the reservation regarding the continuance of the naval clauses of the Treaty of Versailles mentioned in paragraph 7. If the figures proposed by Germany do not result in her exceeding the total of 178,000 tons suggested by the Admiralty, then, so far as we were concerned, no objections would be raised, and it was understood that it might be possible to get agreement with France on such a basis.

11. In the forthcoming negotiations with the French, therefore, this is the procedure which it is suggested should be adopted. It should be made plain, however, in conversations with the French and with the Germans, that our proposals were without prejudice to the naval clauses of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, which could only be abolished by the general consent of the Signatories thereto.

#### *Limitation of Land Forces*

12. The War Office were asked by the Chairman to express their views on the size of the German Army, the number and calibre of guns which it was thought should be permitted in relation to the Army, the size and weight of tanks, or any other points in this connection. Attention was drawn to the fact that the question of para-military organisations, their prohibition or limitation, would also, presumably, be discussed, and suggestions as to the method of dealing with this problem would be valuable.

13. From the point of view of the War Office, it was stated that there was no change in our attitude, and that we could agree to the German Army being expanded to a size of 300,000 effectives, comprising 21 Infantry Divisions and 3 Cavalry Divisions. As for tanks and guns, the limits should be as previously suggested, *i.e.*, with regard to guns—the maximum calibre should be 155 mm., and the size of tanks should be 16 tons.

14. As regards tanks, it is understood that Germany, who had originally stated that she would be prepared to limit herself to tanks of 6 tons, might now wish to go up to the larger limit, as she had found it impracticable to construct tanks of this size to undertake the work required of them. As equality of rights was being conceded to Germany, this could not be opposed.

15. So far as the French point of view was concerned, it was thought that the figure of 300,000 might be acceptable. The strength of the French metropolitan forces was, at present, 350,000, which comprises 20 Infantry Divisions and 5 North African Divisions, giving a total of about 25 Divisions in all.

16. It was pointed out that there would be advantage in specifying definitely the maximum number of divisions into which the 300,000 effectives should be split. If this was not done, it might be possible, by having the divisions at a comparatively low peace strength, to double the size of the forces on mobilisation. It was equally desirable that the number of guns per division should be limited, otherwise each division might have a strength of guns greatly in excess of normal requirements. A very good formula existed in Article 160, Part V, of the Treaty of Versailles, Clause 1 of which read as follows:—

‘By a date which must not be later than 31st March, 1920, the German Army must not comprise more than 7 Divisions of Infantry and 3 Divisions of Cavalry.

After that date the total number of effectives in the Army of the States constituting Germany must not exceed 100,000 men, including officers in establishments and depots.’

This might provide a very convenient precedent in future negotiation, though it must be borne in mind that in the British Draft Disarmament Convention<sup>6</sup> no attempt is made to limit the number of guns permitted to signatories by that Convention. It is hardly likely, therefore, that Germany would ever consider such a limitation in present circumstances.

17. It is doubtful whether we can continue to adhere to our original proposals as to the length of service with the colours. We had originally suggested a figure of 8 months. Germany had claimed 12 months, and we had stated in our memorandum of the 29th January, 1934, that we were prepared to concede her this figure.<sup>7</sup>

18. As regards the German Regular Forces, therefore, the proposal is that Germany should be limited to 300,000 daily effectives with the colours, comprising not more than 21 Infantry Divisions and 3 Cavalry Divisions and armed with guns not exceeding 155 mm. in calibre, and tanks not exceeding 16 tons, and that the length of service with the colours should not exceed 12 months. Any suggestion by Germany to exceed these figures would not only be unacceptable to us, but would, presumably, be totally unacceptable to France.

#### *Para-military Organisations*

19. The German Government, in their statement of the 16th April, 1934 (Cmd. 4559, page 18), in respect of the S.A. and S.S., suggested regulations which—

‘would provide that the S.A. and S.S. would—

- (1) possess no arms;
- (2) receive no instruction in arms;
- (3) not be concentrated or trained in military camps;
- (4) not be, directly or indirectly, commanded or instructed by officers of the Regular Army;
- (5) not engage in, or take part in, field exercises.’

<sup>6</sup> Of March 1933; cf. No. 48, note 4.

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*

It was also agreed that the non-military character of the S.A. and S.S. could be verified by a system of supervision.

20. If Herr Hitler were still prepared to adhere to these proposals we should be quite satisfied. It was to be hoped that he would be ready to do so, seeing that the importance of the S.A. and S.S. from the military point of view had greatly diminished since the proposals were originally put forward.

21. The question of the German police was also raised, but this was held to be rather a separate question, since the Committee at Geneva investigating this matter had decided that 38,000 of the German police were definitely to be classed as a military body. It seemed necessary that agreement should be reached that such German police as might be considered as having a definite military character should be included in the figure of 300,000 effectives. The same principle would, of course, apply to any police forces of other countries possessing military characteristics.

22. So far as the para-military formations are concerned, therefore, we should be perfectly satisfied if Herr Hitler would reaffirm the proposals he made on the 16th April, 1934, as quoted above; but as regards the police, the matter was on a different footing, and such members of the police as might be definitely categorised as having military characteristics should be included in the figure of 300,000 effectives.

### *Limitation of Air Forces*

23. The Air Ministry were asked by the Chairman to put forward their views as to the size to which we should desire the German Air Force to be limited, the figures stating particularly the first-line air strength. In proposing a figure it was pointed out that Germany's air demands would now probably be considerably increased. It was also suggested that it was desirable if possible to specify the types of aircraft which Germany should be allowed, *e.g.*, fighters, bombers, &c., and that a figure for the number of personnel in the Air Force should be quoted if possible.

Suggestions were also requested as to any possible qualitative limitation in respect of aircraft which would, of course, have to be applied internationally, but which might be valuable to put forward.

24. The Committee were informed that in any air agreement with Germany it was essential that in fixing the size of the total German air force the basis of calculation should be parity of Metropolitan Air Forces, aircraft employed overseas or allocated for embarkation in ships thus being excluded. The reasons for these proposed exclusions were that conditions governing the employment of aircraft abroad were quite different from those in the Home country, and that naval aircraft were governed by the size of fleets. It was not thought that the proposal to omit these two categories of aircraft would be the cause of any difficulty.

25. In suggesting a figure for the German Air Force, the assumption was first put forward that France would in no circumstances agree to any reduction in the present size of her air forces. The French Metropolitan Air Force

is at present equal to about 80 of our squadrons, which was equivalent to approximately 1,000 first-line aircraft. It was assumed, further, that Germany would be unwilling to accept any figure below 1,000 aircraft.

26. These figures were in excess of the proposals in the Memorandum of the 16th April, 1934, in which Germany claimed a numerical strength not exceeding '30 per cent. of the combined air forces of Germany's neighbours, or 50 per cent. of the military aircraft possessed by France (in France itself and in the French North African territories), whichever figure was the less.' This figure would work out at somewhere between 600 and 800 first-line aircraft. The Committee were reminded that a report had been received that Germany would wish to include, also, a percentage of the Russian air strength, which would increase her original proposals.

27. On all grounds, therefore, it was felt that it would be unlikely that Germany would be willing to accept a figure of less than 1,000 first-line aircraft, which would give her equality with France and Italy and ourselves so far as Metropolitan Air Forces were concerned. It was considered undesirable, however, that any figure mentioned in the negotiations should be identified with our own approximate position.

28. While it was agreed that Germany would be likely to claim a figure of this kind, it was thought better, from the point of view of tactics, to begin with the proposals of the 16th April, which would form, also, the basis of negotiation as far as the military forces were concerned. To start at once on the basis of 1,000 first line aircraft for Germany might make negotiations with France very difficult, although it should be clearly pointed out to the French that, in our opinion, Germany would not be content with her previous figures.

29. As to the question of specifying the types of aircraft which Germany might be allowed, the Committee were reminded of the great difficulty in defining aircraft because of the interchangeability of modern types for different kinds of work.

30. There would be equal difficulty, also, in attempting to limit personnel, because any limitations could be so easily evaded. The first line strength of any air force was not the measure of its capacity, because everything would depend on the reserves behind, and, if sufficient cadres existed, it might be possible to maintain an offensive for an indefinite period. Any limitation to be effective, therefore, must deal with the question of reserves, and would, in consequence, be most difficult to enforce. It appeared that, as in many other matters, trust must be placed in the good faith of the nation.

31. It was suggested that there were, however, certain general limitations in respect of reserves of aircraft and personnel which might be put forward. The number of service aircraft held in this country for all purposes, in addition to the metropolitan first-line strength, is of the order of 300 per cent. of the metropolitan first-line strength, and a method of assessment such as this might be used as a basis for a similar limitation of German strength. On the question of reserves of personnel, it was obviously not possible to interfere with civil aviation in any way, and, although an ordinary civil pilot might not at once be effective as a military pilot, he would have so much less to



learn, and could, therefore, be available in a shorter time than completely raw personnel.

32. It was suggested, also, that if Germany had a big civil and sporting aviation, she would possess many factors contributory to air power; that sporting pilots were on the way to become war pilots and could in peace time be worked up quite considerably from a technical point of view; that big civil and sporting aviation would mean a multiplicity of aerodromes and equipment, and if Germany possessed all these things and had, in addition, equality with Italy, France and ourselves, then in actual fact she might be stronger than any of these three Powers.

33. It was pointed out that there was considerable force in this contention, but it was also remarked that the abnormal development of civil aviation in Germany had probably been brought about by restrictions on military flying, and that if Germany was now to be granted a normal Air Force, she might devote less attention to her civil aviation. Certain limits were, in any case, imposed on German civil aviation by the fact that it was confined in general to internal services, since she had no colonies or other places with which she had to maintain communication.

34. As regards the total number of pilots on whom the Air Ministry have a call, including all General Duties serving officers, this was of the order of 500 per cent. of the total first-line strength at home and abroad, and it would be desirable that a limit calculated on a similar basis should be accepted by Germany.

35. Returning to the question of qualitative limitation, the Committee were reminded that a suggestion had been put forward on behalf of the United Kingdom Delegation at Geneva that the limit should be 3 tons unladen weight, excluding troop carriers and flying boats. It was pointed out that we, ourselves, could not possibly accept any such restriction unless it was applied universally, although if Germany was ready to agree voluntarily to such a restriction there would be every advantage. It was extremely doubtful whether the United States of America and Japan would take part in any Convention which might be negotiated, and, therefore, it would be better that the question of qualitative limitation for aircraft should not be raised.

36. So far as the size of the German Air Force is concerned, we should in the first place start on the basis of the German proposals of the 16th April, 1934, although it is not expected that Germany will agree to these figures. We should be prepared, if necessary, to concede<sup>8</sup> to Germany having Metropolitan equality with France, Italy and ourselves, that is to say, excluding all overseas aircraft or aircraft allocated for embarkation in ships; and that the figure would be approximately 1,000 first-line aircraft; that it is not possible to specify the types of aircraft which Germany should be allowed owing to the fact that modern aircraft are capable of being employed on all kinds of duties; that it is equally impossible to specify a figure of personnel owing to the ease with which any limitations might be evaded. The same

<sup>8</sup> A marginal note on the filed copy suggests that this word should read 'accede'.

remarks apply to reserves of aircraft and personnel, though, if possible, Germany should be asked to agree to limitations of total numbers calculated as a percentage of her first-line metropolitan strength; and, finally, that while there would be every advantage in Germany limiting the size of her aircraft, it would not be possible for us to put forward any qualitative limitations [*sic*] suggestions unless there was the possibility of their universal acceptance.

#### *Italian Proposals of January 31, 1934*

37. The Conference were also asked to consider the proposals put forward by the Italian Government (Cmd. 4512, pp. 18 and 19).<sup>9</sup> These proposals seemed to have been under discussion between M. Laval and Signor Mussolini at the recent Rome conversations, but the view of the Conference was that so far as we were concerned, they were, in general, unacceptable, and that we should endeavour to avoid discussion of them if possible.

#### *Common Upper Limit*

38. The Committee also were informed that Germany might possibly propose a solution of the whole problem on the lines of a 'common upper limit,' within which each Power would make a unilateral declaration of its requirements.

39. It was agreed that any such proposal was quite unacceptable, and would probably give rise to the very greatest difficulties, particularly as to the nation whose forces should be taken as representing the 'common upper limit.' If this proposal should be put forward by Germany, she should be asked what she intended, and that these difficulties should be pointed out.

### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

40. The conclusions may be summarised as follows:—

#### *Naval Limitations*

- (a) The primary object of negotiations in respect of the German naval forces is to achieve such agreement as will make it possible for Germany, France and other European countries concerned to attend the Naval Conference to be held this year and to avoid the prospects of this world Naval Conference being prejudiced by purely European difficulties. It is, therefore, desirable to treat the naval negotiations on a separate basis if this is possible. At the same time it is highly important to open discussions with Germany as early as possible.
- (b) That no attempt should be made to negotiate with Germany as to the ultimate size of her naval forces, but she should be asked to propose a naval construction programme covering the six years 1937-42.
- (c) That, so long as the figures which Germany may put forward under the proposal in conclusion (b) above do not result in her exceeding the total of 178,000 tons in accordance with the details set out in paragraph 8 of this Report, we shall raise no objections. These proposals

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Volume VI, Nos. 232 and 239.

would enable Germany, if she wished, to construct two vessels of the 'Dunkerque' class.

- (d) That it should be made plain, in the course of the negotiations both with the French and the Germans, that any proposals put forward in connection with the size of the German naval forces, quantitatively or qualitatively, are without prejudice to the present validity of the naval clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, and to any general conditions which the ex-Allied Governments may wish to make in return for the application in practice of the principle regarding equality of rights laid down in the Declaration of the 11th December, 1932.

#### *Limitation of Land Forces*

- (e) That the German regular land forces should be limited to 300,000 daily effectives with the Colours, comprising not more than 21 Infantry Divisions and 3 Cavalry Divisions, and armed with guns not exceeding 155 mm. in calibre and tanks not exceeding 16 tons in weight.
- (f) That we should prefer that the length of service with the Colours should be limited, if possible, to eight months, though we have agreed to this time being extended to twelve months if necessary.
- (g) It is desirable to specify the maximum number of divisions, and the number of guns per division, within the total strength allowed, in order to avoid devices by which the German forces could be more rapidly expanded on mobilisation, though it is doubtful if Germany will agree since no mention is made of this in our Draft Disarmament Convention.

#### *Para-military Organisations*

- (h) That, although the situation in Germany has changed considerably since the Memorandum of the 16th April, 1934, we should be quite satisfied if the German Government would reaffirm the suggestions for regulating the S.A. and S.S. contained in this Memorandum, especially since military importance of these forces had greatly diminished since the proposal had been made.
- (i) That the Police, however, should be treated on a different footing from para-military organisations and that such numbers of the Police Forces as might be definitely categorised as possessing military characteristics should be included in the figure of 300,000 effectives.

#### *Limitation of Air Forces*

- (j) That if, as is anticipated, Germany will not accept the figures proposed on the 16th April, 1934, we should be prepared, if necessary, to concede to Germany metropolitan equality with France, Italy and ourselves; that is to say, excluding all overseas aircraft or aircraft allocated for embarkation in ships, she should be permitted a figure of approximately 1,000 first-line aircraft.
- (k) That it is not possible to specify the types of aircraft of which the German Air Force should be composed, owing to the interchangeability of modern types of aircraft.

- (l) That it is not possible to specify a figure for the personnel of the regular Air Force, owing to the ease with which any limitations might be evaded.
- (m) That, in respect of reserves of aircraft and personnel, Germany should be asked to agree not to exceed total numbers of service aircraft and pilots calculated on a percentage basis of her first-line metropolitan strength.
- (n) That, while there would be every advantage in persuading Germany to limit the size of her aircraft, it would not be possible for us to put forward any suggestions for qualitative limitations unless there was a possibility of their universal acceptance.

*Italian Proposals of January 31, 1934*

- (o) That we should endeavour to avoid discussions of these proposals, if possible, since they are wholly unacceptable.

*Common Upper Limit*

- (p) That, if a solution on the lines of a common upper limit should be proposed by Germany, we should ask exactly what is intended by this proposal, and should explain the difficulties and, in particular, those in respect of the nation whose forces should be taken as representing the common upper limit.

M. P. A. HANKEY

**No. 373**

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 2)*

*No. 56 [C 869/55/18]*

Sir,

MOSCOW, *January 25, 1935*

The Soviet Government share the misgivings of the rest of Europe regarding Germany's future activities after her recent success in the Saar. Hitler's public renunciation of any further territorial claims on France is regarded in the Soviet Union as proof that Germany's attention will be turned more and more towards Eastern Europe and Russia. Thus M. Litvinov considers that the Eastern Pact must be proceeded with at all costs. The Italian Ambassador holds the view, with which I agree, that M. Litvinov is striving to crush any idea of a Central European pact, Soviet policy being that Germany should have no understanding with anybody and that there should be no grouping of Powers in which Russia is not a member.

2. For these reasons M. Litvinov has endeavoured to prevail on M. Laval to drop the question of the immediate stabilisation of Germany's position in regard to armaments and to try to break down the resistance of Berlin and Warsaw to the conclusion of an Eastern Locarno. If these two countries continue to be obstinate, M. Litvinov hopes fervidly that some form of a direct entente will materialise between the Soviet Union and France. This,

indeed, I think, is his real aim at the present time: and as to Great Britain he is perhaps somewhat disappointed, finding that, although having given her blessing to the conclusion of an Eastern Pact, she seems, in his eyes, just as anxious to be on good terms at one and the same time with France as well as with Germany, and to welcome any scheme which might introduce an element of security in the affairs of Central Europe. The Soviet Government is sincerely on the side of peace. This does not, however, mean that the Soviet Union wishes that the jealousies between European countries should cease. Her external policy rather is based on the principle of capitalist contradictions. These contradictions must always be kept on the boil, but must not however be allowed to boil over until it suits the purpose of the Soviet Government.<sup>1</sup>

I have, &c.,  
CHILSTON

<sup>1</sup> In minutes on this despatch Mr. L. Collier, head of the Northern Department, remarked on February 6 that it would be 'all to the bad, if M. Litvinov and his policy of Franco-Soviet rapprochement should fall out of favour at Moscow'. But he thought that the existing Eastern Pact scheme would almost certainly end in a fiasco and for that reason he had recommended before the Anglo-French discussions of February 1-3 the need to persuade the French Government to satisfy M. Litvinov in some other manner. Mr. Sargent on the same day referred to his own suggestion on another paper (cf. No. 428 below) as to the need for some variation of the Eastern Pact. Sir R. Vansittart on February 7 gave instructions for these views to be combined in a memorandum. He added: 'While MM. Flandin and Laval were here, I several times pressed them to produce a modification of the Eastern pact; but they evaded the issue, though they recognised its existence. R.V. Feb. 7.'

### No. 374

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 27, 10 a.m.)*

*No. 11 Telegraphic [C 679/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, January 27, 1935, 2.10 a.m.

Your telegrams Nos. 17<sup>1</sup> and 18 Saving.<sup>2</sup>

It is of little use to give you long account of interview which I, helped by Mr. Campbell, have just<sup>3</sup> had with Messieurs Flandin and Laval. Gist of it is that we used every argument in your telegram and every other we could think of but neither Minister would budge from position that they could not bring French Parliament and public opinion to swallow the abrogation of chapter 5 of the Treaty of Versailles unless Germany gave proof of territorial honesty by undertaking to adhere to Pact of Rome and Eastern Pact.

I had laid stress on paragraph six of your telegram No. 17 but the French Ministers said over and over again that any formula must include reference to necessity for adherence to those Pacts.

<sup>1</sup> No. 368.

<sup>2</sup> No. 369.

<sup>3</sup> This telegram was drafted on January 26.

Monsieur Laval had also prepared a draft communiqué for the same purpose as yours. I am sending translation of text in my immediately following telegram.<sup>4</sup> Sting of it is in the fifth paragraph.

Conclusion of long discussion was that Laval would give me on Monday<sup>5</sup> a draft formula which he hoped would combine the two desiderata, English and French, in a shape which His Majesty's Government can accept.

I have therefore kept paragraph 5 of your telegram No. 17 in reserve.

French Ministers were pained but not surprised at veto on raising question of any discussion between General Staffs but said that it would make it all the more impossible for them to justify to French Parliament acceptance of British formula as it stands.

Monsieur Laval's parting words were that he by no means despaired of finding a solution and I venture to suggest we wait to see what Monday brings forth.

<sup>4</sup> No. 375.

<sup>5</sup> January 28.

### No. 375

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 27, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 12 Telegraphic [C 680/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, January 27, 1935, 2.10 a.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

*Most Confidential.*

Following is translation of French draft formula. Begins.

1. French and British Ministers have proceeded in a spirit of friendliest confidence to examine general situation as it is today in particular after meetings and decisions at Geneva during the last months.

2. They express their pleasure at the very important and effective rôle played by the League of Nations in the settlement of international problems and at the results due to the conciliatory spirit displayed by the governments which took part.

3. They were glad to re-affirm close solidarity of their two governments in seeking together all conditions likely to justify the pursuit and to ensure success of a wide policy of international collaboration.

4. They likewise noted the great value for consolidation of the peace of the community of views and of the entente recently reached in Rome between French and Italian Governments.

5. They were in agreement in recognising that a prompt settlement of projects seeking to increase security, especially in Eastern Europe and in centre of the Continent, was indispensable for realisation of an international agreement on problem of armaments the study of which it was essential to pursue in all its aspects.

<sup>1</sup> No. 374.

6. The Ministers expressed their confidence in far reaching and satisfactory results which from the economic and social point of view, a lasting improvement of the political conditions would have on general healthiness of the life of all peoples. Ends.

No. 376

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 28, 5.15 p.m.)*

*No. 13 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 705/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, January 28, 1935

I have just returned from interview with Minister for Foreign Affairs. He had not been able to fulfil his undertaking, given at my interview on Saturday,<sup>1</sup> to prepare alternative draft formula and said that he would take one with him to London. He also said that French Government were unable to accept draft formula proposed in your telegram No. 18 Saving.<sup>2</sup> In these circumstances there will, I presume, be no question of any public announcement such as that proposed in paragraph 5 of your telegram No. 17 [Saving].<sup>3</sup>

Monsieur Laval said that fact was that, although fully agreed in principle, the two governments had different ideas as to best methods of obtaining a limitation of German armaments. France, engaged in seeking pacification by pacts, must not encourage Germany 'à se désintéresser des pactes' by agreeing to an immediate disarmament discussion founded on principle of recognition of German re-armament.

On the other hand if Germany, after London Conference, realises that policy of pacts remains, France will make appropriate and friendly gestures to Germany in order to facilitate German adhesion to those pacts. Minister for Foreign Affairs himself will work hard in this direction, steadily keeping in close contact with you. Monsieur Laval does not in spite of Hitler's declarations despair of a successful issue, and that fairly soon, provided always that he has moral support of His Majesty's Government.

For reasons of interior politics also it is impossible for French Government to accept the method suggested in our proposed communiqué. What meeting in London must do is to give public opinion of our two countries impression of our determination to pursue a policy of peace and of rapprochement between France and Germany but, added Monsieur Laval, in dealing with Germany 'la paix sans la sécurité c'est la guerre'. We must have patience and seek to calm our respective public opinions and bring them together.

Moreover the French Government has not only its own public opinion to consider but must also think of Little Entente, Entente Balkanique and Russia. To go too fast would be to risk what has been achieved and all to the profit of Germany. His conversations at Geneva had deeply impressed him with importance of this consideration.

<sup>1</sup> January 26; see No. 374.

<sup>2</sup> No. 369.

<sup>3</sup> No. 368.

**No. 377**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 28, 5.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 14 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 706/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, January 28, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs has to answer an interpellation by Monsieur Franklin-Boullin [Bouillon] in the Chamber tomorrow.<sup>2</sup> He does not know the exact form of the interpellation, though he expects it to be violent, but he read to me his proposed reply, which seemed to me most suitable. He told me he had not shown it to Monsieur Flandin, nor did he propose to do so, as he was confident that President of Council would agree and anyhow it was his own (Monsieur Laval's) province. It represents London meeting as a natural and valuable 'prise de contact' and speaking of security, says that 'this security to which every nation has the right, France asks for all peoples.' This phrase is put in in consequence of a recent interview between Minister for Foreign Affairs and my German colleague. Monsieur Laval asked Herr Koester what French Government could do to make the German Government believe in its sincerity. Herr Koester replied that French Government could say that Germany had the same right to national defence as all other countries. Monsieur Laval said that he would be ready to do so and phrase I have quoted is the first step in that direction. Monsieur Laval hoped that our press would be quick to see its importance.

2. Herr Koester was going to Berlin this week but Monsieur Laval had asked him to wait until he returns from London.

<sup>1</sup> No. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 341.

**No. 378**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 23 Saving: Telegraphic [C 680/55/18]*

*Private*

FOREIGN OFFICE, January 28, 1935, 7.30 p.m.

Following from Sir R. Vansittart.

We now understand from telephone conversation with Embassy this afternoon that French are not satisfied with our formula and do not intend to produce anything themselves before Ministers' arrival here.<sup>1</sup>

You of course realise that paragraphs 1 to 4 and 6 of formula in Paris telegram No. 12<sup>2</sup> have no real substance, and that the only part of the formula which has any significance is the reference in paragraph 5 to the Eastern and Austrian Pacts.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 376.

<sup>2</sup> No. 375.



I do not think His Majesty's Government need or will necessarily object to reference to Eastern Pact in this form: what we are concerned to avoid is creation of any impression that French and we are trying by a new kind of 'dictat' to force Eastern Pact upon Germany in a pre-arranged form which would not be open to discussion, for this would be exceedingly bad tactics. Provided nothing more is in effect said than that increased security is essential in Eastern Europe and in the Centre of Europe, we think that on this point agreement between ourselves and the French should be easy.

On the other hand the French formula with its complete silence on the subject of legalisation seems to aim at what the Secretary of State has always tried to guard against, namely that we should insist upon Germany submitting to our demands as regards the Eastern Pact before we will even discuss anything else with her. Whereas we have always held—*vide* the Secretary of State's conversation with M. Laval on December 22nd<sup>3</sup>—that the Eastern Pact shall not constitute a pre-condition but shall form part of a general settlement. Another point to remember is that when we agreed to give it our support in July it was definitely on the understanding that it would facilitate an armaments convention. Far from this being now the case, the demand for its prior conclusion would have precisely the opposite effect.

British public opinion would not consider any statement of British policy which did not provide for an offer, as part of a general settlement, of course, to cancel Part V of the Treaty to amount to a sincere and genuine attempt to give Germany the equality of status promised to her in December 1932. As the problem presents itself to us, the only question now is to decide the conditions which should be attached to this offer of cancellation, and we consider that the wording of our formula covers all the French requirements in this matter, since it refers specifically not only to armaments but to security. The French draft would seem, or could be interpreted, to mean a general settlement without the counterpart.

Our joint objective we feel ought to be the composition of such an Anglo-French scheme for a general settlement that if and when presented to Germany it would appear to public opinion as a *reasonable* offer which it would be *unreasonable* of Germany to reject. The present French formula would definitely appear (or could easily be made to appear) to be an *unreasonable* offer (insofar as it contains any offer at all) which might *reasonably* be rejected by Germany. In fact, the French draft does not achieve the object which we had in view when putting forward the idea of a joint formula, since it does not afford in present circumstances any basis on which we could possibly approach Germany.

Such an inconclusive outcome to the Anglo-French conversations would cause great disappointment in this country and corresponding satisfaction in Berlin, where it would be either exploited as an Anglo-French failure to agree, or denounced as an Anglo-French refusal to grant Germany her long-promised equality of rights. In fact, instead of improving the general situation

<sup>3</sup> See No. 311.

it might easily make matters definitely worse in certain respects. I hope therefore that French Ministers will reconsider carefully the whole position before they put forward their draft formula to us at the forthcoming meeting, as representing the furthest point to which they can go towards meeting us.

I would emphasise again that our formula contains nothing really new or startling from the French point of view. After all, express provision for the cancellation of the armaments clauses of Part V already figures in article 96 of our draft Disarmament Convention, which the French Government accepted as a basis for the future convention.<sup>4</sup>

These are of course only my personal views, and I leave it to you to make such use of them as you think fit or possible, either by using them yourself with M. Laval or by letting Campbell use them with Léger.

<sup>4</sup> This sentence was not in the approved filed draft of this telegram: it is added here from a confidential printed copy.

#### No. 379

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 30, 10.5 a.m.)*

*No. 28 Saving: Telegraphic [C 769/55/18]*

BERLIN, *January 28, 1935*

Roumanian Minister tells me he had a conversation last week with General von Reichenau<sup>1</sup> who scoffed at any idea of a German return to the League and at likelihood of any convention for limitation of armaments. When asked what then he advocated he replied that the only sensible plan was for each country to arm up to maximum of its capacity and of its defence requirements. Of those requirements however each State must alone be the judge.

Chief of the Armed Forces Office of the Reichswehr Ministry.

#### No. 380

*Memorandum by Mr. Sargent on the proposed Eastern Pact*

*[C 962/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 28, 1935*

One of the most difficult problems at the forthcoming French visit is going to be that of the so-called Eastern Pact.

On the one hand the French are being very hard pressed by Litvinoff and Benes to insist upon it as it stands; while on the other hand it is quite clear that Hitler, supported by the Poles, will refuse to have it at any cost. Thus we have all the makings of an immediate deadlock, especially if the French wish to make Germany's unreserved acceptance a pre-condition of their talking to the Germans at all.

What is then our position to be? Are we to intervene to prevent this deadlock, and if so, how? Or are we to acquiesce in its coming about? If so, are we prepared to see emerge therefrom a direct Franco-Russian alliance?

Before considering these questions it may be convenient to recall the origin and intention of the present Eastern Pact.

It was from the very outset a Russian conception rather than a French one.<sup>1</sup> The Russians have never disguised the fact that what they wanted was a direct Franco-Russian alliance to defend their rear in the case of a war in the Far East. A multilateral treaty in the form of a mutual guarantee pact only appealed to them insofar as it contained the makings of a Franco-Russian alliance. Since then the Franco-Italian agreement has, we know, frightened Litvinoff—and the London visit is also probably making him uneasy—because he sees that the more security France can obtain from agreement with Italy and Great Britain, the less need she will have of Russia. Hence this present intensive campaign on the part of Litvinoff in favour of the Eastern Pact. The interest of Benes and the Little Entente can be explained on the same lines.

The French invented the present scheme of a multilateral mutual guarantee pact because, having failed to obtain any further guarantee as regards 'security' from us, and having lost faith in the Polish alliance, they felt compelled to accept Russia's offer of co-operation when proffered. But they did not believe sufficiently in Russia's honesty, or France's and Russia's community of interests, to wish to enter into an all-embracing alliance if they could help it, especially as they realised that such an alliance would shock and offend Great Britain.

From the point of view of 'security' France would, I have no doubt, attach to a whispered assurance by Great Britain vastly more value than to the most substantial promises and pledges from Litvinoff. But this whispered assurance is not forthcoming, and thus France is driven gradually ever nearer and nearer to the fatal solution of a Russian alliance.

As for H.M. Government, their position is that, although never enthusiastic, they agreed last summer to give the scheme of a mutual guarantee treaty their support<sup>2</sup> (a) because, and on condition that, the pact would enable the disarmament negotiations to be resumed; and (b) because they hoped in this way to prevent a Franco-Russian alliance.

As regards (a), the position has been completely reversed since last summer, and in present circumstances the practical effect of our insisting on the Eastern Pact would be to produce such a deadlock as would render any armament negotiations impossible. I do not suggest that even if the Eastern Pact were dropped the way would then be clear for armament negotiations, but I do suggest that if we are not careful the Germans are going to manoeuvre themselves into the position where they will be able to argue that if a *general settlement*, including an armaments agreement, has been rendered impossible, it is because France and Great Britain insisted as a *sine qua non* that Germany should adhere to the Eastern Pact. No doubt Germany's arguments would

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Volume VI, No. 428.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Nos. 492 and 496.

be fundamentally dishonest, but they would be very plausible and I fear that they would be received with a great deal of approval and sympathy by the British press and public.

The sort of arguments that Germany is going to use is already known. She is going to say that the whole scheme has been worked out without her being consulted, and that she has been presented with a *fait accompli*. I am afraid that this is in large measure true. Although the Eastern Pact has not been written out in treaty form, the system it contemplates is so clearly laid down that a drafting committee could put it into treaty language in half an hour, and, as far as I know, France has never offered to discuss any modifications of the system with the Germans. Again, Germany will ask why she should pledge herself to send the German army to defend, for instance, Estonia if attacked by Latvia, or still worse Lithuania (of all people, considering the Memel question) if attacked by Russia or Poland. France evidently does not consider her own security to be endangered by such attacks, since she herself has definitely contracted out of any undertaking to guarantee the Baltic States under the Pact. These, and similar arguments, will, I am afraid, be received with sympathy by British public opinion, who will reflect that it is rather unfair for us to ask Germany to assume obligations for the defence of certain countries which we would in no circumstances undertake ourselves.

It is on this account that I hope that we will not nail our flag to the mast of the Eastern Pact in its present form; that we will not allow it to figure in the proposed public formula at present under discussion with the French; and, above all, that we will try during the forthcoming French visit to induce French Ministers to modify its whole conception and character, so that if and when presented to Germany as one of the conditions of our cancelling Part V of the Treaty, it would appear to be a *reasonable* condition *unreasonably* rejected by Germany. In its present form the pact will, I submit, appear as an *unreasonable* condition *reasonably* rejected by Germany.

In our instructions to Sir George Clerk on Friday last<sup>3</sup> he was told to ask the French Ministers whether, in view of German opposition to the pact in its present form, they had any alternative to offer. Needless to say they will not have. But I think that we ought to have something in hand, and I would suggest that an immediate attempt should be made to formulate some concrete ideas to put before the French Ministers on their arrival, if not before.

We shall, of course, have a hard task in moving them from their present position, owing to the intensive work already done by Litvinoff and Benes. But I do not see why we should silently acquiesce in these two remaining the unchallenged masters of the field. We too have means of influencing the French Government, and British support and approval is still of great value to France. A frank and direct offer of Anglo-French military co-operation would probably enable us to have our own way as regards the Eastern Pact without any difficulty. But although such an offer is out of the question, I still think that a great deal can be accomplished by judicious pressure.

<sup>3</sup> January 25; see No. 368.

Another reason why we should, I submit, make the effort is because of our original desire to prevent the Franco-Russian alliance. I do not see that anything will now prevent such an alliance (except of course the offer of a British alliance) for one cannot hope that Germany in her present mood will accept any scheme for guaranteeing security in Eastern Europe. But the prospect of a return to the pre-war grouping of Powers is so horrible—and a Franco-Russian alliance would be the first step towards it and would be quickly followed by others—that I feel we ought to be able to show that at all events we had exhausted every method in order to prevent this development. We must not allow it to be said that H.M. Government acquiesced in, or even approved of, a return to the pre-war Franco-Russian alliance. If it comes about it must be shown to have been forced upon Europe by Germany and not to have been the result of insistence by France and Great Britain that Germany should submit to unreasonable conditions in order to obtain her equality of rights.

This brings us to another question, for which we ought to have an answer ready. The French Ministers will probably ask us to approve their action in entering into a Franco-Russian alliance because Germany has rejected the alternative of a multilateral guarantee pact. Are we prepared to give such a policy our blessing? I venture to say that we certainly are not until and unless Germany has rejected a scheme for guaranteeing security in Eastern Europe which we consider reasonable. And even then I think it would be wise to warn the French Government that a Franco-Russian alliance would probably make the operation of the Treaty of Locarno very difficult.

The Treaty of Locarno assumes that France's policy is purely defensive and that she is complete mistress of it. Her previous commitments towards Poland and Czechoslovakia were carefully adapted so as to come into the Locarno framework. An alliance with Russia would, however, impose new and ill-defined obligations on France which might easily affect the defensive character of her European policy. If an ally of Russia in Europe she could hardly avoid being an ally in the Far East as well. Thus the Franco-Russian alliance would bring perceptibly nearer the German-Japanese alliance, and it is easy to see how such a combination might react on Great Britain's obligations under the Treaty of Locarno. In such a network of inter-locking commitments it might be impossible for Great Britain to decide, in the event of a Franco-German clash, who had been the aggressor, and the prospect of this uncertainty would render even more unpalatable to British public opinion than it already is any proposal to give British intervention under Locarno a more automatic and pre-arranged character.

To sum up, I would submit the following propositions:—

1. H.M. Government should not, in the altered circumstances of to-day, undertake to break with Germany if she refuses to accept the Eastern Pact in its present form of a mutual guarantee treaty.
2. H.M. Government should try to persuade the French Government to put forward some alternative method of guaranteeing security in Eastern Europe, and should if necessary devise and propose a scheme of her own for this purpose.

3. H.M. Government should warn the French Government that they cannot approve of a Franco-Russian alliance, and that the existence of such an alliance might render the operation of the Treaty of Locarno very difficult.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Minutes attached to this memorandum by Sir Robert Vansittart, Mr. Eden, and Mr. H. J. Seymour included the following comments. 'By all means try to work out an alternative to the present form of the Eastern Pact, if you have any suggestion as to how this could be done . . . I certainly hope that we shall be able to dissuade the French from a pre-war formation—I share Mr. Sargent's apprehensions on this—by providing some possible alternative form of the Eastern pact which might be acceptable to Germany, or which would obviously put her in the wrong if she refused. . . . R.V. Jan. 28.' 'I agree that the position would be changed if we could make any "security" offer, but what are the chances of that? . . . A.E. Jan 29.' 'Seen by the S. of S. H.J.S.'

### No. 381

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 18 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 705/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 29, 1935, 1.45 p.m.*

Following from Sir R. Vansittart.

Rumour has reached us that M. Laval is not keeping M. Léger and the Quai d'Orsay informed of your conversations, and that the latter appreciate more clearly than M. Laval the British point of view. In these circumstances I consider it would be desirable that Mr. Campbell should see M. Léger this afternoon and speak to him fully and seriously on the lines of Foreign Office telegrams Nos. 23 Saving<sup>1</sup> and 17.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Campbell should take this opportunity of conveying a personal message from me to M. Léger to the effect that I am seriously perturbed at the prospect of the London meeting proving a complete failure unless the French Government are prepared to agree to some constructive policy on the lines indicated in our draft formula. Such a failure would only encourage Germany to greater unreasonableness and render even more difficult than at present, if not quite impossible, M. Laval's scheme of obtaining Germany's consent to the French policy of pacts by making, after the London conference 'appropriate and friendly gestures' to her (see your telegram No. 13).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 378.      <sup>2</sup> No. 382 below.      <sup>3</sup> No. 376.

### No. 382

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 17 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 705/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 29, 1935, 2.30 p.m.*

On the information given by you in your telegrams Nos. 11,<sup>1</sup> 12<sup>2</sup> and 13<sup>3</sup> we find it extremely difficult to understand why French Government are

<sup>1</sup> No. 374.      <sup>2</sup> No. 375.      <sup>3</sup> No. 376.

unable to accept draft formula proposed in my telegram No. 18 Saving,<sup>4</sup> especially as M. Laval's arguments which you report seem to be based on a complete misunderstanding of our proposals.

I will take them in order:—

(1) Your telegram No. 11 says that French Parliament and public opinion cannot swallow abrogation of Part V of Treaty of Versailles unless Germany adheres to Pact of Rome and Eastern Pact; but my telegram No. 18 Saving shows that three acts

(a) abrogation of Part V

(b) new armaments provisions and

(c) new security provisions

are to be simultaneous and part of one general settlement. This point has already been dealt with in my telegram No. 23<sup>5</sup> Saving.

(2) My telegram No. 23 Saving will have shown you that His Majesty's Government will not necessarily object to reference in formula to need for increase of security in Eastern Europe and in centre of continent in generalised form given in your telegram No. 12.<sup>2</sup>

(3) I do not think two Governments necessarily have 'different ideas as to the best methods of obtaining a limitation of German armaments' (see your telegram No. 13<sup>3</sup>); and it is not the case, as you say M. Laval told you, that we are asking France who is 'engaged in seeking pacification by Pacts' to 'encourage Germany "de se désintéresser des pactes"' by agreeing to an immediate disarmament or to discussions founded on the 'principle of recognition of German rearmament'. As stated above, three acts of general settlement are to be simultaneous.

I hope you corrected this complete misinterpretation by M. Laval of our draft formula. Not only did our formula, as stated above, provide that the three acts necessary for a general settlement should be simultaneous, but the word 'disarmament' is not so much as mentioned in the formula as being one of these acts. As for the principle of the recognition of German rearmament, the French Ministers must realise that it is useless to expect any settlement with Germany which does not recognise this principle. In fact, the recognition of this principle is the only bargaining counter left to us with which to obtain from Germany any concessions at all, either in the matter of pacts or anything else.

(4) I am afraid it is essential from point of view of public opinion here that some more progress should be made at London meeting than merely to tell the world that 'policy of pacts remains', which presumably implies no more than that the present negotiations respecting Eastern Pact will continue. But, as already stated, our proposal in no way implies that France should abandon a policy of pacts, though we hope that that policy will be so presented that public opinion generally will admit it to be reasonable.

(5)<sup>6</sup> You are well aware that we have fully in mind French commitments

<sup>4</sup> No. 369.

<sup>5</sup> No. 378.

<sup>6</sup> This paragraph was originally numbered (6). A preceding paragraph, crossed out on the approved draft, had read: '(5) I do not think we necessarily dispute M. Laval's statement that "in dealing with Germany la paix sans la sécurité c'est la guerre".'

to Little Entente, Balkan Entente and Russia; and this was one of the reasons why our formula made it clear that three acts would be simultaneous.

From what you have reported I can see no real difference between the French Government and ourselves; and I am therefore at a loss to understand why they are unable to accept our draft formula—if necessary, of course, with amendments—as a basis for discussion. We very much hope you may be able to clear up the misunderstanding; otherwise valuable time will be lost in London in explaining away what I believe is a non-existent difference of opinion.

**No. 383**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 57 Telegraphic [C 705/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 29, 1935, 6 p.m.*

My telegrams Nos. 17 and 18 Saving<sup>1</sup> and No. 17 to Paris,<sup>2</sup> and Paris telegrams Nos. 11,<sup>3</sup> 12<sup>4</sup> and 13<sup>5</sup> and my telegrams Nos. 58<sup>6</sup> and 59.<sup>7</sup>

We desire to keep Italian Government fully informed in reference to the Anglo-French conversations which will take place in London at the end of this week.

2. My above mentioned telegrams to Paris will show you the efforts which are being made to prepare the ground. My telegram to Paris No. 17<sup>2</sup> of to-day's date which has also been repeated to you will show you the difficulty in which M. Laval's reply has placed us. He seems to contemplate as the result of the London visit a declaration which, for all effective purpose, will be limited to a stipulation that Germany should accept the Austrian and Eastern Pacts. We, on the other hand, are convinced that the London conversations should lead to an Anglo-Franco-Italian declaration proposing a general settlement under which the armaments clauses of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, together with agreed provisions about security and armaments, should be simultaneously reached. It seems to us that there is no prospect of Germany accepting the security provisions required by France unless at the same time realities as to German re-armament are faced and provided for.

3. I should greatly appreciate the earliest intimation of Signor Mussolini's view on this subject. If he agrees with the general position which we are disposed to take up, an intimation from him to the French Government that he considers it essential to provide for the conditional recognition of German rearmament on the lines of our proposed formula would I feel sure carry much weight in Paris.

Repeated to Paris No. 19.

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 368-9.

<sup>2</sup> No. 382.

<sup>3</sup> No. 374.

<sup>4</sup> No. 375.

<sup>5</sup> No. 376.

<sup>6</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 58 of 6 p.m. on January 29 to Rome, not printed, summarized the arguments in telegram No. 23 Saving to Paris (No. 378).

<sup>7</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 59 of 6.40 p.m. on January 29 to Rome, not printed, summarized the chief points in Mr. Harvey's memorandum (No. 371).



*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 29, 11.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 15 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 727/55/18]*

*Immediate. Confidential*

PARIS, January 29, 1935

Your telegram No. 17.<sup>1</sup>

I do not think there has been any fundamental misunderstanding of our proposals. Messieurs Flandin and Laval have been learning that they have run ahead not only of public opinion but of their colleagues in the government and have been faced in the Council by facts and figures produced by the three Ministers of Defence of German re-armament and French deficiencies which have greatly alarmed them. In consequence they were scared by thoughts of publication of the formula and frightened of committing themselves in advance of their arrival in London to anything that looks like an admission of abrogation of part five of the Treaty of Versailles even as part of a general settlement.

While waiting to see Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Quai D'Orsay I have been discussing the whole question with Monsieur Léger, and as a result, I now have some hope that the French Ministers will now be ready to take your formula, as modified in my immediately preceding telegram<sup>2</sup> as a basis for *discussion*.

Monsieur Laval has just telephoned from the Chamber that he has to go direct from there to a political engagement in the suburbs and cannot see me until tomorrow and modified text is therefore only what Monsieur Léger thinks his ministers will accept, but he seemed quite confident that they would do so.

<sup>1</sup> No. 382.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is evidently to No. 385 below.

No. 385

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 29, 11.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 16 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 728/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, January 29, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram<sup>1</sup> and your telegram No. 18 Saving.<sup>2</sup>

After first paragraph of *your* formula insert paragraph 5 of *French* formula as given in my telegram No. 12<sup>3</sup> substituting the following phrase for the first four words 'His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the French Republic are agreed'.

Then continue with second paragraph of *your* formula down to 'they declare', continuing, 'for their part, that, provided a general settlement can be reached by free negotiation between Germany and the other parties of the

<sup>1</sup> No. 384.

<sup>2</sup> No. 369.

<sup>3</sup> No. 375.

Treaty of Versailles with regard to armaments and maintenance of security, part of such settlement being cancellation by Germany of notice of her intention to withdraw from the League of Nations and expression of her intention to resume active membership of the League, the abrogation of those provisions of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles which at present limit the arms and armed forces of Germany shall also form part of that settlement.'

Final paragraph of *your* formula to be omitted.

#### No. 386

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 29, 11.45 p.m.)*

*No. 17 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 729/55/18]*

PARIS, *January 29, 1935*

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Following for Sir R. Vansittart.

My telegram No. 15<sup>2</sup> will, I hope, dispose of the rumour about Messieurs Laval and Léger.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Campbell is in bed with influenza so I went to see Léger and spoke to him in the sense of your telegram. He is as alive as you and I are to the dangers of London meeting proving a failure.

<sup>1</sup> No. 385.

<sup>2</sup> No. 384.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 381.

#### No. 387

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 31)*

*No. 2 Saving: Telegraphic [C 784/55/18]*

VIENNA, *January 29, 1935*

Reuter's correspondent called last night to inform of views current in Reichs [Reich] German circles here which he affirms are in touch with German Legation. Views seem worth recording in view of Herr Hitler's arguments (see Berlin telegram No. 23 Saving<sup>1</sup> of January 23rd). Stress is laid on desirability of Anglo-German agreement. Main object of such agreement would be to give Germany a free hand to restore order in Europe, control of world being thus shared between United States of America, British Empire, Germany and Japan. Existing obstacles to recovery in Europe would be removed, given Great Britain's goodwill and fact that Germany would be militarily strong enough to support her plans by autumn of this year or at latest spring of next year. Germany was determined to assert her *Machtstellung* if only for economic reasons. No significance was attached to the numerous pacts now under consideration to which Germany's signature could at most only be given as a temporary expediency.

<sup>1</sup> No. 362.

Reuter's correspondent asked me for guidance in regard to above. I told him that proposition of his informant was no new one as it had been trotted out in one form or another by successive German negotiators for nearly half a century past. My hope was, however, that it did not represent views of serious German circles as I did not feel that British public opinion would be any more disposed to-day to swallow dangerous fallacy underlying German conception than it had been in the past.

I learn from Federal Chancery that they continue to be most dissatisfied as regards German intentions towards Austria. Secretary-General told me yesterday that he had had a sharp exchange with Herr von Papen in the course of which he had told the latter that no real progress had been made in betterment of Austro-German relations since Herr von Papen's arrival, a remark which had seemed to occasion Herr von Papen some surprise. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed French Minister that he had told Herr von Papen that his reiterated expression of good intentions—they are repeated to all with whom Herr von Papen comes into contact—were of little interest. Austria now wanted proof of Germany's intentions by deeds and not merely words.

Result of Saar plebiscite has exercised a potent effect on the minds of Germans in this capital.

Repeated to Berlin.

#### No. 388

#### *Memorandum on a possible mutual guarantee treaty against air attack<sup>1</sup>*

[C 1190/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 29, 1935*

The account given by Mr. Harvey (First Secretary of the British Embassy in Paris) of the French desiderata for the London Conference<sup>2</sup> suggests that the French are themselves thinking of an Air Convention, in which British assistance to France, should it become necessary, would take the form of aircraft instead of land forces and by which similar French assistance would be guaranteed to Great Britain against a German attack.

On July 13th the Foreign Secretary stated in the House of Commons that 'Belgium is no less vital to the interests and safety of this country to-day than it has been in times past. That is a geographical fact which nothing can change. Indeed changed conditions, especially in connection with the air, have not altered that historic fact at all; they have only served to emphasize it.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was presented to Sir J. Simon on January 30 by Sir R. Vansittart with the comment: 'We are unanimous in hoping that you and your colleagues will approve its findings.'

<sup>2</sup> No. 371.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 26, note 3.

On July 28th [30th], 1934, the Lord President of the Council made the following statement in the House of Commons:—

Let us never forget this. Since the day of the air the old frontiers are gone. When you think of the defence of England, you no longer think of the chalk cliffs of Dover; you think of the Rhine. That is where our frontier lies.<sup>4</sup>

In the House of Commons on November 28th, 1934, Mr. Baldwin again drew attention to the importance of the German air rearmament and said that:

H.M. Government are determined, in no conditions, to accept any position of inferiority with regard to what air force may be raised in Germany in the future.<sup>5</sup>

Public opinion in this country is then well aware of the dangers inherent in German air rearmament; and it is entitled to expect, when the discussions respecting armaments are resumed, that in the final settlement reached, and whilst so many countries are claiming fresh contributions to their security, some contribution will be made to the security of the United Kingdom.

In these circumstances it is desirable to consider what attitude the British negotiators should adopt, should the French Ministers, in the forthcoming discussions, raise the question of the conclusion of some Air Convention, under which the United Kingdom, Belgium, France and Germany should mutually guarantee one another against attack from the air; and should undertake that if one of their number should be so attacked, the other parties to the agreement should immediately retaliate against the aggressor.

Such an agreement would seem to have very considerable advantages for this country, in that whilst not involving for us commitments different from those which already exist under Locarno, it would contain firm provision, securing for us, in the event of an air attack by Germany, the assistance of the French air force in the circumstances described above.

The form, however, which such an agreement might take requires careful consideration. The undertaking on our part to assist a party which is attacked from the air is at most a 'clarification' of our existing commitments under Locarno. The guarantee which it is proposed should be given to us is new, but if it were treated as an extension to this country of the guarantees already given to the other parties to Locarno, it would have to be given subject to practically the same conditions as those provided by Locarno. If therefore an arrangement proceeded on these lines, it would bear a considerable resemblance to the Treaty of Locarno itself and this may be thought undesirable for reasons connected with public opinion.

It is suggested therefore that a preferable course would be to abandon any idea of grafting something on to Locarno, and to concentrate on provisions having for their object the elimination of the possibility of a surprise attack from the air. It is suggested that the general scheme should be that, in the event of any one of the parties to the proposed arrangement being the victim of an air attack by another party, the victim should at once receive the assist-

<sup>4</sup> See 292 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 2339; cf. No. 26, note 4.

<sup>5</sup> See 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 883.

ance of the air forces of the other parties. In order to avoid any inconsistency with the provisions of existing treaties such as the Covenant, the Pact of Paris and Locarno itself, it would probably be necessary to provide that the guarantee of assistance should not operate in favour of any party which had previously gone to war in violation of its existing obligations. The effect of this would be that if Germany attacked France by land, in violation of Locarno, France would be entitled to retaliate by air attack, but anything in the nature of a 'bolt from the blue' effected by air attack would at once bring into operation the guarantee given by the other parties.

The Foreign Office strongly favour this method of approach. Were it adopted, they think it should be possible to reach agreement with the French in the forthcoming disarmament discussions. Further it would surely make a considerable appeal to our public opinion.

There remains the question of who should be the participants to the Mutual Guarantee. From the point of view of British security France is of course the only one that matters. But in order to give the scheme the appearance of mutuality, Germany and Belgium would have to be included. Geographically speaking Holland ought also to be included, but politically that would probably be impossible. Belgium as a guarantor may seem slightly ludicrous; but as she is one already under Locarno there is a precedent for it. In practice no doubt her intervention would take the form of giving not so much 'the assistance of the Belgian air forces' as facilities on Belgian territory for the air forces of the victim of the illegal attack.<sup>6</sup>

Lastly, should Italy as one of the Locarno Powers be asked to participate? In view of her known susceptibilities and having regard to our general policy of maintaining equally close co-operation with both France and Germany,<sup>7</sup> it will be difficult to exclude her. But her inclusion will mean that she would be both a guarantor and a guaranteed Power; i.e. we should have to come to her assistance if attacked by Germany or France, and she would have to come to our assistance if attacked by Germany (or France).

'Assistance' of course would not necessarily mean the transfer of air forces to the country attacked. It might, and indeed probably would, rather involve a direct attack by the guarantor against the territory of the violator.<sup>8</sup>

ANNEX TO No. 388  
*Minute by Sir John Simon*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 31, 1935*

I agree with this scheme for a mutual guarantee treaty against air attack, and indeed have for some time been thinking along these lines. I add the following observations on specific points:

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the account by Baron de Cartier, Belgian Ambassador in London, of an interview with a British Foreign Office official ('un fonctionnaire important'), apparently on January 30, printed in *D.D.B.*, vol. iii, No. 149. No account of this interview has been traced in the Foreign Office archives.

<sup>7</sup> It was suggested in the filed copy that this word should read 'Italy'.

<sup>8</sup> Sir J. Simon's minute on this memorandum is printed as an Annex below.

(1) I strongly agree that this treaty should not be expressed as an amplification or explanation of Locarno. It would, I think, be necessary that it should include a clause stating that its provisions were in addition to and not in substitution for or qualification of the existing responsibilities of the parties, whether under Locarno or otherwise.

(2) It is important to consider what is the *quid pro quo* which France would get in return for the undoubted advantage which we should get from a French guarantee to use their air forces against Germany if Germany attacked us. We are already bound, under Locarno, to 'come to the assistance' of France if Germany attacks France from the air. But the French have long wanted us to assure them specifically that our assistance in this event would not be limited to land troops, which they know very well would take some time to get there and might not be very numerous. A specific assurance that in the event supposed it is our air force which would promptly come to their aid would therefore have a real value for them. But the considerations mentioned in this paragraph show how important it will be (if the idea of an air convention is approved) to associate this item in our programme with the other offers for assurances which the Cabinet authorised us to make to French Ministers. In other words, if we indicate our willingness to do other things which the French want without reference to this proposal, it will be more difficult to secure French assent to the present plan.

(3) It seems to me that the treaty would have to use words which secured that the assistance was 'with all the air forces at their disposition for the purpose', or something of the kind, in order that, if the case for help arises it should not be given half-heartedly or nominally. This may not be a very important point, for of course even a slight fulfilment of the obligation will involve the country that gives it in war with the offending Power.

(4) What is 'air attack'? For example, does Germany deliver an air attack on Belgium if certain German reconnaissance machines fly over a corner of Belgium without dropping bombs? I suggest that the best phrase may be 'attack or invasion by air'. It would also be necessary to provide that this includes attack of [?on] the fleet or mercantile marine of a party in home waters, or in European waters.

(5) *Italy*. I quite see that from our point of view it would be much simpler to limit this engagement to Germany, France, Belgium and ourselves. If possible, I should like so to limit it. Air attack on Italy by Germany or France would carry us into applications of no advantage to ourselves. If the convention is kept quite separate from Locarno the omission of Italy is not illogical. But one cannot help seeing that France may wish, in return for what is undoubtedly a new concession by France to us, to get from us what would be an entirely new concession to her, viz., assistance by our air force if Italy attacked France. The convention would in any event necessarily cover the case (unlikely enough) of the United Kingdom attacking Germany by air, in which case France must attack us!

(6) As regards Germany, the argument we should have to use with Berlin would be that Germany claims a large air force partly because she considers

herself in danger from air attack by France. Our guarantee would therefore be an insurance against this danger. On the other hand, Germany is still more afraid of attack from Russia, and this air convention would have nothing to say to that. Consequently, Germany would still insist that she must have a large air force to protect herself against danger from the east.

(7) It would be necessary to consider whether the French territory includes Morocco and Tunis, and it may be whether Italian territory includes Libya. The answer should be no in both cases.

(8) I entirely agree with the ingenious suggestion that there must be included a provision that the guarantee of assistance will not operate in favour of any party which had previously gone to war in violation of its existing obligations.

(9) Finally, I feel that while we should ventilate this matter with the French and take soundings, we should not even endeavour to carry it to a precise point, for I am convinced that the best prospect of ultimate agreement with Germany depends on discussing these things with the Germans before they crystallize.

J. S.

No. 389

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 30, 1 p.m.)*

*No. 18 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 751/55/18]*

PARIS, January 30, 1935

Following for Sir R. Vansittart.

I have just returned from seeing M. Laval who agrees as a basis of discussion to formula in form amended by you this morning.<sup>1</sup>

For convenience of reference wording is now as follows.

Begins—

The object of the meeting with the French President of the Council of Ministers and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs which has just been concluded was, by a continuance of the procedure so happily begun in Rome in the early days of the year, to promote the peace of the world by a closer co-operation between all the European Powers on the basis of the recognition of interests and rights which are common to everyone of them.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the French Republic are agreed that neither Germany nor any other Power whose armaments have been defined by the Peace treaties is entitled by unilateral action to modify these obligations. But recalling the principle of equality of rights as defined by the Declaration of December 11th, 1932, they declare, for their part, that provided a general settlement can be reached by free negotiation between Germany and the other Powers concerned with

<sup>1</sup> The revised formula had been telephoned to Paris at 11.45 a.m. with an explanation that 'it represented Sir R. Vansittart's views but had not yet been submitted to Ministers'.

regard to armaments and the maintenance of security, especially in Eastern Europe and the centre of the continent, the abrogation of those provisions of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles which at present limit the arms and armed forces of Germany shall also form part of the settlement. The settlement should also include the cancellation by Germany of notice of her intention to withdraw from the League of Nations and an expression of her intention to resume an active membership of the League.

Ends.

**No. 390**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 21 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 705/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 30, 1935, 5 p.m.*

Paragraph 6, my telegram No. 17 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

I gather from paragraph 3 of your telegram No. 13<sup>2</sup> that French have at present no alternative to Eastern Pact to offer Germany.

But though we supported the French scheme for an Eastern Pact last July because we hoped it would facilitate the resumption of the Disarmament Conference, the situation has now been completely altered by Germany's refusal, and although we are prepared to make a fresh and loyal effort to induce Germany to enter into some combination for guaranteeing the security of Eastern Europe, we are increasingly afraid that, as the negotiation proceeds and the points of difference become clearer to public opinion, it will become ever more difficult to maintain with success (and so long as the German offer of bilateral pacts holds good) that if Germany continues to reject the scheme of last July the wrong is all on her side or that the responsibility for the deadlock is entirely hers.

It is for instance difficult to counter her argument that she should not be asked to guarantee, if necessary by force, each of the Baltic States against attack by Russia, Poland or each other, especially since France under the present scheme has herself contracted out of any obligation to guarantee the Baltic States.

We can quite understand that if the French proposal can be achieved it would be a more satisfactory result than a system of bilateral pacts: but if Germany will concede the latter, it seems difficult to argue that, so far as concerns security against possible aggression by herself, she has not made her full contribution.

I should be glad if you would try to clear up this point with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and I should also like to know, were the German offer of bilateral pacts accepted, exactly what would be the French objection to a proposal that France should guarantee to the respective participants the

<sup>1</sup> No. 368.

<sup>2</sup> No. 376.



observance of those pacts in which France is specially interested (i.e. presumably at least the Russo-German pact), Russia in return guaranteeing to France and Germany the observance of the Treaty of Locarno.

These points are of real importance; and since we are supporting the French in a fresh attempt to provide for greater security in Eastern Europe, we must clear them up as soon as possible.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Wigram drafted this telegram in the light of paragraph 2 of Mr. Sargent's memorandum of January 28 (No. 380).

## No. 391

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 1, 10 a.m.)*

*No. 30 Saving: Telegraphic [C 785/55/18]*

BERLIN, January 30, 1935

Lord Lothian<sup>1</sup> returned to London by air this morning, and promised me to give you a full account of his activities here. He and Mr. Evans<sup>2</sup> had an interview of over two hours yesterday with the Chancellor.<sup>3</sup> Last night Lord Lothian dined with us to meet Baron and Baroness von Neurath, the Minister of Justice, Herr Meissner,<sup>4</sup> General von Reichenau, Herr von Ribbentrop, the French Ambassador and many others.

Baron von Neurath, who received Lord Lothian some days ago, remarked to me rather pointedly that he had declined to be present at his interview with the Chancellor. To Lady Phipps His Excellency said during dinner that many messengers came and went, but the permanent officials remained behind to clear up the mess after their departure. The fact is British missionaries of peace of varying shades of political thought seem to come here in growing numbers, and, after conversations with various personages, return to England with some plan of their own whereby peace is to be ensured for a given number of years.<sup>5</sup>

Lord Lothian told me that he was impressed by the sincerity of Herr Hitler, whom he regards as a prophet. What struck me most in the rapid account he gave me of their conversation was the fact that Germany's voracious

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lothian, Secretary of the Rhodes Trust, had been guest of honour at the annual dinner in Berlin on January 26 of the Association of German Rhodes Scholars.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. T. P. Conwell-Evans, a member of the Anglo-German Society and a former lecturer on Anglo-German diplomatic history at Königsberg.

<sup>3</sup> For preliminary arrangements for this interview see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 445. A note on the interview is printed as Appendix III (a) in J. R. M. Butler, *Lord Lothian* (London, 1960).

<sup>4</sup> State Secretary and head of the Reich President's Secretariat.

<sup>5</sup> Referring to these visitors to Berlin, Sir R. Vansittart remarked in a private letter to Sir E. Phipps on February 1: 'I sincerely sympathize with you and am doing what I can to prevent these foolish and offensive busybodies from having any credentials or encouragement. Incidentally, I shall be able to quote rather aptly Neurath's remark recorded in your Saving telegram No. 30.'

appetite in the naval sphere stands revealed by the Chancellor's claim to possess a fleet equal to 33 % of ours. This practically confirms the figure that he let drop to me (35 %), as reported in my telegram No. 254 (Saving)<sup>6</sup> of the 28th November last, though at the time it struck me as so exaggerated that I pretended not to hear it.

If this percentage is claimed at a time when Germany affects only to require sufficient ships to defend herself in the Baltic what may we not expect if Colonies are presented to her? It must be remembered, moreover, that this claim is advanced at a moment when the German Government have every reason to wish to astonish Great Britain by their extreme moderation, in order to detach that Power from the group of suspicious neighbours surrounding them.

After dinner I had some talk with General von Reichenau, who assured me that Germany ardently desired an Arms Convention: this would, he declared, be a great feather in Herr Hitler's cap, and set the seal on the Nazi régime. (See, however, his remarks to the Roumanian Minister reported in my telegram No. 28 (Saving)<sup>7</sup> of January 28th). I failed to elicit what price Herr Hitler would pay for this feather.

In the course of his conversation with Lord Lothian the Führer seems, as usual, to have harped on the Russian danger, both military and economic, and on the powerful allies that the Soviet would find in the communists in all countries opposed to them. Herr Hitler never fails to make use of the Russian bogey, though how genuine his fears are it is difficult to say. Army circles here openly declare that the Reichswehr would cut through the Soviet army like a knife cuts butter. Nor do they believe in any sudden galvanising of Russia into efficiency, either military or economic.

<sup>6</sup> No. 230.      <sup>7</sup> No. 379.

## No. 392

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 1)*  
*No. 101 [C 841/55/18]*

Sir,

BERLIN, *January 30, 1935*

I have been trying to check the statement reported in Sir Eric Drummond's telegram No. 16 of the 17th January to Geneva<sup>1</sup> to the effect that the German rearmament demands had increased to 400,000 men and 3,000 aeroplanes.

2. In my Saving telegrams No. 264<sup>2</sup> of 7th December and No. 281<sup>3</sup> of 29th December, and in my semi-official letter of the 13th December to Mr. Sargent,<sup>4</sup> I had the honour to convey to you certain indications that Germany's pretensions in the sphere of rearmament were growing. These indications were borne out by Baron von Neurath's admission, on the 19th January,

<sup>1</sup> See No. 351.

<sup>2</sup> No. 281.

<sup>3</sup> No. 313.

<sup>4</sup> No. 289.

that there will be an increase in the German demands over those laid before Mr. Eden, at any rate as regards the air, owing to the entry of the Russian factor (see my telegram No. 24<sup>5</sup> of 19th January) and by the statement of the Chancellor to the Italian Ambassador, on the 22nd January, that for financial reasons he would welcome some rearmament agreement were it not for Russia (my Saving telegram No. 26<sup>6</sup> of 23rd January). Moreover, a high official at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs recently told the Belgian Minister<sup>7</sup> that an army of 400,000 men would be demanded together with an air force of 2,500 aeroplanes. Further, General von Reichenau told the Roumanian Minister last week that the only sensible plan in the matter of armaments was for each country to arm to the maximum of its capacity and of its defensive requirements (see my Saving telegram No. 28<sup>8</sup> of 28th January).

3. On the other hand General von Reichenau assured the Belgian military attaché about a week ago that the demands of the army would not be raised above those put forward last spring. While admitting the possibility that the German Government may now place their demands at the figure of 400,000 men, either for purposes of bargaining or in case other Governments may insist on reckoning the Landespolizei and certain units of the S.S. as troops, the Military Attaché to this Embassy is still convinced that the Reichswehr Ministry do not wish actually to increase the army beyond a total establishment of 300,000 men.

4. As regards the air, however, it is clear that Germany will now demand more than she asked last spring but it is not yet known whether the figure of 2,500 aeroplanes, which has been mentioned, includes reserves or not.

5. At sea, the Chancellor told Lord Lothian on the 29th January<sup>9</sup> Germany would only ask for 33 % of the British Navy. As I reported in the third paragraph of my telegram No. 254<sup>10</sup> I gathered from Herr Hitler's remarks that 35 % would be the percentage of the British strength required by Germany.

I have, &c.,

ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>5</sup> No. 355.

<sup>6</sup> No. 364.

<sup>7</sup> See No. 396 below.

<sup>8</sup> No. 379.

<sup>9</sup> See No. 391.

<sup>10</sup> See No. 230.

### No. 393

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 31, 11.20 a.m.)*  
*No. 20 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 780/55/18]*

PARIS, *January 31, 1935*

Your telegram No. 21.<sup>1</sup>

I had a few moments talk with Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Léger, and M. Massigli last night at the Elysée from which I gathered (a) that French are alive to possibilities foreshadowed in paragraphs 2 and 3 of your

<sup>1</sup> No. 390.

telegram and have thought over alternatives and (b) that French Government would be prepared to give guarantees suggested in paragraph 5 of your telegram.

2. All this was very hurried, for it was not possible to go into the question seriously in the confusion of a party of 2,000 or 3,000, but Mr. Harvey who is travelling with the French Ministers today will be able to discuss it thoroughly with M. Léger and M. Massigli and report upshot to Mr. Sargent this evening.

### No. 394

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 31, 12.52 p.m.)*

*No. 30 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 781/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, January 31, 1935

Minister for Foreign Affairs has just handed to me for my information copy of the memorandum sent to Paris and Rome by the German Government asking for certain explanations regarding the Danubian pact.<sup>1</sup> German Ambassador will have already given you a copy.<sup>2</sup>

Baron von Neurath explained that he wished this memorandum handed in before the French ministers' visit to London. He said that as an example of the meaning of the word 'non-interference' he would like to know whether the wish of the Little Entente to veto a Hapsburg restoration or the attaching of political conditions to the granting of the Lausanne loan to Austria were to be considered 'non-interference'.

His Excellency assured me that Germany was not opposed, in principle, to signing this pact provided satisfactory reply was received to the German memorandum, he added again that it would influence her decision favourably if Great Britain were to sign it.

Baron von Neurath will take his time in replying to the French note regarding the Eastern pact<sup>3</sup> but said German Government would not even contemplate mutual assistance clause which might conceivably embroil Germany with England.

His Excellency again declared that the German Government would like a convention for limitation of armament but not on the basis contemplated last spring. They would accept general control with total abolition of certain arms, gas, etc.

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this memorandum of January 27 see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 460.

<sup>2</sup> A copy was communicated to Sir J. Simon by the German Ambassador on January 31.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 342, note 1.

**No. 395**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 31, 9.10 p.m.)*  
*No. 65 Telegraphic [C 783/55/18]*

ROME, *January 31, 1935, 7.35 p.m.*

Paris telegram No. 18.<sup>1</sup>

I gave Signor Suvich this morning copy of agreed communiqué, explaining to him briefly what had passed previously with regard to it. Having read it Signor Suvich remarked he feared that German government while possibly ready to accept Rome Pact as regards Austria would definitely refuse the Eastern one. Further he thought Germans might say that arrangements set out in communiqué were in the nature of a 'diktat' and that they could not, in view of their public opinion, agree to them because of this. They would declare that while they might be ready to return to the League they must do so on their own conditions, not on those laid down by others.

I replied that of course it was possible that Germany might refuse present plan but at any rate we ought all to do our best to get her to accept it. After all she had told us that she would be willing to come back to the League if equality of rights were assured to her. Signor Suvich said that if this were so, and he was inclined to agree, it might be well to make point clear in any commentary on communiqué which was issued. I further pointed out to him that communiqué provided for a general settlement by free negotiation and this could hardly be termed dictation. Signor Suvich said that point had escaped his notice and he thought it a good one.

I am seeing Signor Mussolini tomorrow evening and if you have any further message for Italian government I should be glad to receive it before then.

<sup>1</sup> No. 389.

**No. 396**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received January 31, 9.10 p.m.)*  
*No. 31 Telegraphic [C 786/55/18]*

BERLIN, *January 31, 1935, 8.48 p.m.*

My telegram No. 21.<sup>1</sup>

Herr von Buelow spoke to Belgian Minister last night with even more brutal frankness.

He said that the German demands would continue to increase in the re-armament sphere; even the total of effectives (300,000) would now be higher. As for the British idea of inducing Germany to return to Geneva by bait of cancellation of part 5 of the treaty, that was futile, for her equalisation of rights entitled her to more than that mere cancellation, and indeed

<sup>1</sup> No. 347.

she had already taken it. He indicated that it was a waste of time to ask Germany what her requirements were as regards armaments. Germany would ask how far all the other Powers meant to arm and would base herself on their replies, in fact she would re-arm up to the point she herself considered necessary in order to meet any possible hostile combination.

**No. 397**

*Notes of Anglo-French Conversations, held at No. 10 Downing Street, S.W.1,  
on February 1-3, 1935<sup>1</sup>*

[C 893/55/18]\*

FIRST MEETING, FEBRUARY 1, 1935, at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

*Great Britain*

The Right Hon. JAMES RAMSAY  
MACDONALD, M.P., Prime  
Minister.

The Right Hon. STANLEY BALDWIN,  
M.P., Lord President of the  
Council.

The Right Hon. Sir JOHN SIMON,  
M.P., Secretary of State for  
Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN,  
M.P., Lord Privy Seal.

*France*

M. P. E. FLANDIN, President of the  
Council of Ministers.

M. PIERRE LAVAL, Minister for  
Foreign Affairs.

The following were also present:

Sir ROBERT VANSITTART, Perma-  
nent Under-Secretary of State for  
Foreign Affairs.

Colonel Sir MAURICE HANKEY, Sec-  
retary of the Cabinet.

Mr. O. G. SARGENT, Foreign Office.

Mr. R. F. WIGRAM, Foreign Office.

Mr. O. C. HARVEY, British Em-  
bassy, Paris.

M. ANDRÉ CORBIN, French Amba-  
sador, London.

M. ALEXIS LÉGER, Secretary-  
General, Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs.

M. RENÉ MASSIGLI, Ministry for  
Foreign Affairs.

M. LÉON NOËL, Secretary-General  
of the Presidency of the Council  
of Ministers.

M. ROLAND DE MARGERIE, French  
Embassy, London.

THE PRIME MINISTER welcomed MM. Flandin and Laval to London.

He wished to express on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom high appreciation of the work performed at Rome. His Majesty's

<sup>1</sup> See also Nos. 398 and 400 below.

Government had followed it with much interest, and when the French and Italian Governments had signed their agreement,<sup>2</sup> His Majesty's Government had heartily applauded. Mr. MacDonald wished to congratulate the French Government on this achievement on behalf of His Majesty's Government.

He would also mention the wonderful success of the co-operation at Geneva in the question of the Saar.<sup>3</sup> The atmosphere of Europe had been improved, and so had the hope of securing real peace.

The task before the United Kingdom and French Governments that day was to continue their co-operation in pursuit of security and tranquillity in Europe. He hoped that the object would be advanced by the present meeting.

M. FLANDIN expressed, in the name of the French Government, gratitude for Mr. MacDonald's words. He was very grateful for the reference to M. Laval's work at Rome, which had marked a new stage on the path of peace. The French Ministers wished to continue on that path on the present occasion; they had made a search for those conditions from which could issue peace and tranquillity to the present and future generations.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS felt that the present meeting had originated in the meetings which had taken place with MM. Flandin and Laval in Paris on the 22nd December,<sup>4</sup> and later with M. Laval in Geneva.<sup>5</sup> He remembered the observation made to him by M. Laval—which he understood was also the view of Signor Mussolini—that the problem which they had to face in Europe and in relation to Germany left them with three alternative courses:—

- (1) They might leave things alone and let them drift; of all courses, that was the most stupid.
- (2) Italy, France and the United Kingdom might combine to stop the rearmament of Germany by the exercise of force. That course was not practicable, and must therefore be put aside.
- (3) They might endeavour by negotiation to secure a general settlement. Sir J. Simon thought that the British and French Governments had been working on that basis since his meeting with M. Laval.

On that basis they had come to an agreement as to a general basis on which the negotiations might now proceed. The very essence of that general basis, its principle, was to attempt to reach a general agreement by the method of simultaneity, by treating the problem before them as a whole, by dealing with each essential part as a matter to be arranged side by side with other parts.

In his view, the general agreement to be reached had four parts:—

- (1) The very important part represented by the problem of armaments.
- (2) The very important part represented by the problem of security.

Neither of these parts could be settled without the other.

<sup>2</sup> On January 7, 1935; cf. Nos. 328 and 335.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Nos. 263, 276, 280, and 286.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 311.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 335.

- (3) The provision—not in advance but simultaneous—that the armaments restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles would be abrogated, not at the will of Germany, but by the other parties to the Treaty as part of a general convention.
- (4) The cancellation by Germany of her notice to leave the League of Nations, and notice of her intention to take an effective part in the League.

At this stage the document entitled 'Basis of Discussion' (Annex I)<sup>6</sup> was distributed to the meeting.

MR. MACDONALD asked the meeting to regard this document as very confidential. It was in the nature of an agenda; it was not an aide-mémoire.

SIR JOHN SIMON explained the document. The first paragraph represented their general objective. He was sure that there would be no disagreement with it.

The first sentence of paragraph 2 called attention to the agreement of the French and British Governments, and he understood the Italian Government also, that there could be no unilateral denunciation of the treaty restrictions on armaments. The French Ministers knew that a private intimation to the German Government had already been made on this matter by the British Ambassador in Berlin.<sup>7</sup> His Majesty's Government were ready to make the same declaration publicly.

The remainder of paragraph 2 of the 'Basis of Discussion' (Annex I) dealt with four points—armaments, security, Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, and Germany's return to the League. All these points were essential; but none had priority; all must be satisfied before general agreement could be reached. His Majesty's Government thought it useless to say that Germany must return to the League first, and that then the other points would be dealt with. They thought it right to say that the general settlement must include them all. The abrogation of Part V was not a condition which Germany could impose as a matter to be dealt with first; it would accompany, and be simultaneous with the other matters. His Majesty's Government took the same view as regards security and as regards the new armaments provisions. What was essential was that the four topics should be treated as all involved in one general settlement.

M. LAVAL confirmed Sir J. Simon's reference to his conversation with him at Geneva. They must either agree with Germany or make war upon her. He did not think that the French Government could remain indefinitely on the note of the 17th April, 1934.

As regards the paper 'Basis of Discussion' (Annex 1), he had no observations to make on paragraph 1; it was the common wish of all Governments anxious for peace.

<sup>6</sup> Not printed. Annex I was identical with the formula in No. 389 except that (i) in paragraph 2 the words 'in Eastern Europe and the centre of the continent' were replaced by 'in Central and Eastern Europe'; (ii) the following sentences were added at the end of the formula: '(Final paragraph not yet agreed by M. Laval). His Majesty's Government and the French Government trust that the other Governments concerned may share these views.'

<sup>7</sup> See No. 302.



As regards paragraph 2, he agreed respecting no unilateral liberation from Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.

He had certain observations to make as regards the principle of simultaneity mentioned by Sir J. Simon. There could not be an armaments convention save in a pacified Europe. As long as the nations were afraid of each other nothing could be done. From that point of view the journey to Rome had been useful.

The Saar question had been settled, and Hitler had said that Germany had no further territorial claim to make upon France. But M. Laval thought that the French and Italian Governments had been wise to conclude the Rome Pact concerning Austria before the Saar plebiscite, as there had been signs that otherwise, and immediately after the Saar, Germany might have turned to Austria.

The French Government had received very recently some German observations respecting the Austrian Pact. But there was one frontier Germany seemed determined to leave open, and that was the eastern frontier. She had given a number of reasons, including her agreement with Poland, why she could do nothing about the Eastern Pact.

M. Laval thought that if the question of German armaments was settled, and Part V of the Treaty abrogated, and the existing situation legalised without any addition to security, the French and British Governments would not have done good work for peace. It was indispensable to know, by means, if necessary, of conversations with Germany, whether she entered [*sic*] into this peace organisation, and under what form she proposed so to enter.

If Germany was given satisfaction about equality of rights and she refused her responsibility in eastern Europe, it would suggest that she harboured evil designs.

M. Laval said that he had talked in Geneva with representatives of Russia, the Little *Entente* and the Balkan Powers; they were all very disturbed lest the British and French Governments should settle the armaments question and not deal with security. These nations would have confidence in the degree to which they felt the organisation of peace would precede an armaments convention.

On the fundamentals of the problem the French Ministers were ready to discuss, but they would be distrustful so long as Germany did not clear up the position of the Eastern Pact.

The British representatives might ask why France held so much to the Eastern Pact. The French Government thought that, if Germany wished to make trouble in that part of Europe, it would become general and would spread to the west.

The French Government were ready to examine all possible forms which the Eastern Pact might take with the British Ministers, he (M. Laval) had constantly explained to the German Ambassador in Paris that the Eastern Pact was not meant to encircle Germany and that no discriminatory policy against her was intended.

SIR JOHN SIMON pointed out that M. Laval had spoken of the abrogation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles and of the conclusion of a new Armaments

Convention without adequate security. He entirely agreed that there would be an injury to peace if that were done. But the 'Basis of Discussion' (Annex I) before the meeting did not say that. What the principle of simultaneity, to which he had drawn attention, meant was that if no new agreement were reached about security, then there would be no new Armaments Agreement and no abrogation of Part V.

He might recall the declaration about the Eastern Pact which he had made in the House of Commons in the summer of 1934.<sup>8</sup> His Majesty's Government stood by that declaration. They did not withdraw from it, though they still felt that the form of the Eastern Pact required to be worked out.

Both as regards the Austrian and the Eastern Pacts, British Ministers had already publicly stated—and they would state again—that France might count on the support and goodwill of His Majesty's Government.

Sir J. Simon did not think there was any real difference between M. Laval and the British Ministers. There was a difference of emphasis perhaps, but none of principle. His Majesty's Government were not contemplating releases for Germany without security.

MR. MACDONALD observed that the paper 'Basis of Discussion' (Annex I) raised four points:—

- (1) Armaments.
- (2) Security, especially in Central and Eastern Europe.
- (3) Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.
- (4) Germany's return to the League.

He thought that the keyword was security and what they ought now to do was to see if they could agree on the contents of security; to study what the French Government wanted and what His Majesty's Government wanted.

M. LAVAL said that the word 'abrogation' would always shock French opinion. That word would awaken unpleasant memories with his countrymen. It would be better to talk of a new military convention in a system of security.

M. Laval said that there were three kinds of security:—

- (1) The signature of collective regional pacts,
- (2) Relationship of the forces of the different countries, and,
- (3) Guarantees of execution.

M. FLANDIN gave a general outline of what the French Government meant by security under these three heads.

The first embraced the series of collective regional pacts. The French Government thought that the work done at Locarno should be extended to the rest of Europe. That was why the French Government had always tried for pacts in Central and Eastern Europe. The French Government wanted the pact negotiated in Rome to become a reality. They also attached importance to the Eastern Pact.

Secondly, as regards military security, the French Government had always thought that in the relationship of the French and German forces there must

<sup>8</sup> On July 13, 1934; see 292 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 691–700.

be a margin of superiority for France. It was not enough that France should have merely a total superiority, for she needed that for the defence of her Empire; and it was not possible to take into account her forces overseas. The French Government wanted a margin of superiority for their metropolitan forces. That margin was defensive and would work as a guarantee of peace.

Lastly, as regards guarantees of execution, the French Government must, in the event of aggression, have the security that the guarantors of Locarno would intervene rapidly.

In the view of the technicians a war of aggression would open by an aerial attack which would have a character of great rapidity. Eight hours would be sufficient to mobilise an aerial attack. Thus it was certain that any delay for consultation would involve risks of a mortal character for the attacked country. Before the guarantors could intervene the end of the war might have been decided.

Not only for the security of France, but for that of the co-contractants in the Locarno Treaty with France, they must complete the existing agreements by technical agreements in the sphere of aeronautics.

M. LAVAL then read a statement on guarantees of execution for a Disarmament Convention, a translation of which appears as Annex II of these notes.

He then read a further statement which appears as Annex III to these notes, and is entitled 'Plan of Discussion.'

MR. MACDONALD wondered if it was possible to go into so much detail at the present meeting. Was not their chief task at this meeting to agree upon a declaration covering the main points dealt with in the paper 'Basis of Discussion' (Annex I).

M. LAVAL explained that he had made his detailed observations in order that the British Ministers might know exactly the French position. But he did not wish to discuss all these details. He agreed that what was desirable was a declaration on essential points so that the world and Germany might know that the British and French Governments were pursuing in common the organisation of peace.

SIR J. SIMON asked if in his reference to the necessity of some agreement about air attack, M. Flandin was considering this as part of a system of guarantees of execution, or whether he meant to refer to the possibility of some agreement about air attack even if a general convention was not concluded.

M. FLANDIN said that he was thinking of the second hypothesis mentioned by Sir J. Simon. He thought that the conclusion of some agreement about air attack would be most useful to create the state of general security which M. Laval had said was necessary to permit the discussion of the general convention. He thought that if they could agree upon some general formula such as that which appears in Annex I and some convention providing against the danger of aerial attack, they would have done good work.

M. LAVAL then submitted a French draft of the 'Basis of Discussion.' It appears as Annex IV to these notes.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

ANNEX I TO No. 397

*Basis of Discussion*<sup>9</sup>

ANNEX II TO No. 397

*M. Laval's Statement on 'Guarantees of Execution' for a  
Disarmament Convention*

The French Government and its delegation at the Disarmament Conference have always emphasised the importance for the eventual appreciation of a plan of armaments limitation, of the solution to be given to the question of 'guarantees of execution.'

In order to define his views and to reply to an enquiry by Mr. Henderson, M. Paul-Boncour, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, addressed him a note on the 5th December, 1933, which figures in the Blue Book (pages 11 and 12).<sup>10</sup> This note only concerns the general guarantees to be inserted in a Convention, it being understood that *regional agreements between States particularly interested in the limitation of armaments in a certain region might be concluded in order to define the regional application of the principles in view.*

These principles can be summarised as follows:—

- (1) In case of a duly noted violation of the Convention, request by the Permanent Disarmament Commission addressed to the contravening State to regularise its position within a period to be indicated.
- (2) From this moment and pending the correction of the violation, the contravening State loses the benefit of certain clauses of the Convention or is considered as having violated the Pact of Paris.
- (3) Despatch of a Committee of Inspection to verify the correction of the violation.
- (4) If the violation is maintained, obligation of the contracting parties to have recourse to measures of pressure.
- (5) These measures of pressure will be of an economic and financial order and their importance will be adapted to the circumstances and gravity of the infraction committed.
- (6) The Permanent Commission may go so far as to recommend the rupture of diplomatic relations and to invite the contracting parties to afford their technical assistance to the States menaced by the violation which has been committed (for example, to enable them to make good the start which the violating State may have secured in the manufacture of forbidden materials). If war breaks out as a result of the violation of the engagements undertaken, there will be a presumption of aggression in respect of the violating State.

These general principles raise incontestable difficulty in their application. In fact, they leave great liberty to the States whose co-operation would be

<sup>9</sup> Not here printed: see note 6 above.

<sup>10</sup> A reference to the French official publication, *Négociations relatives à la réduction et à la limitation des armements, 14 octobre 1933–17 avril 1934* (France: Ministère des Affaires Étrangères).

invited against the violating State, and they have in no way the automatic character the need for which has often been stated by France. It cannot be said that any fully satisfactory results have been reached. Moreover, the Franco-British conversation begun on the subject last spring was interrupted by the despatch of the French Note of the 17th April.

At Geneva a Committee basing itself on the French Note of the 5th December proceeded to a first exchange of views as a result of which certain possibilities were defined, but no conclusions reached. The British delegation, moreover, adopted a most reserved attitude during this exchange of views.

The systems contemplated leave an important place to the regional *ententes* for the definition in view of their application of the general principles to be laid down by the Convention. And this justifies us in asking the British Government, which cannot disinterest itself, what attitude it would adopt if the German Government did not observe the engagements resulting from a future Convention any better than it has observed its past engagements. The principal questions then are the following:—

- (a) How far is England prepared to go in respect of general engagements?
- (b) If the Convention to be concluded contemplated, in addition to the general engagements to be undertaken by all the contracting parties, special engagements on the part of States specially interested in the maintenance, in a determined area, of the Armaments Statute fixed for that area, would the British Government be ready to undertake such engagements? How far could such engagements go?

It is hardly necessary to indicate the importance in any system of guarantees of execution of the regular operation of *permanent* and *automatic control*. On this point, moreover, the British Government has not hitherto expressed more than very general declarations.

### ANNEX III TO No. 397

#### *Plan of Discussion (Submitted by M. Laval)*

##### *I.—The Present Situation*

##### *German Armaments*

The situation is uncertain. Extraordinary measures have been taken to ensure the secrecy of the preparations, but the importance of the results is not in doubt.

The Reichswehr now exceeds 300,000 men and is tending towards 400,000. It is also necessary to take into account the police, whose effectives of about 180,000 men represent a military value.

As regards aviation, it is difficult to give figures. We know that all sporting aviation is in reality organised on a military basis. As regards military machines, the estimates may vary; at the present moment there are perhaps 700 machines; 900 are contemplated for the end of 1935 and 1,400, approximately, for the end of 1936.

When equality of rights is spoken of in Germany, what is now meant is no longer moral equality but actual equality.

What does the German Government want? It is not certain that it is unanimous even in still wanting a general convention. In any case, it wants it on other figures than those admitted last year; Hitler has expressly said so to the French Ambassador.

Consequence: if a general convention takes place it will be a *rearmament convention* for all Europe. The question now before us is if and how this rearmament can be limited, and if and how an armaments race can be prevented from developing.

## II.—*The Policy of Security*

### (1) *Individual Security*

It is evident that in this situation each State must first of all count upon itself. France, for her part, exactly like England (Mr. Baldwin's speech),<sup>11</sup> has decided to make the necessary effort to defend herself against every menace. When she recommends agreements for security it is not because she hesitates before the effort, it is because she seeks peace within a general peace, and because the policy of armament pursued individually by the Powers is not in the long run a solution of peace.

It is also necessary that, in an eventual armaments settlement, the principle of margins of superiority should be recognised, whether on sea, in the air, or on the land, in order to compensate Germany's neighbours for the advantages of the latter in respect of industrial and other resources.

### (2) *Collective Security*

#### A. *In the general European sphere—*

(a) International solidarity: return of Germany to the League of Nations and participation of Germany in a definition of the aggressor.

(b) Accession to the regional pacts.

The British Government knows the spirit in which the policy of pacts has been pursued (M. Barthou's statement in London last July),<sup>12</sup> and how the French Government has been anxious to avoid at any moment giving it the appearance of a policy of encirclement in respect of Germany. If complete results have not yet been obtained, this is precisely because, on the German side, there has been manifest a systematic opposition towards collective agreements, and because only bilateral agreements are desired, which are those which permit of all the manœuvres of division and all intrigues. The effort must be pursued.

If Germany desires the *détente* she must understand that she will find it in the conclusion of these agreements, in the discussion of which she shall take part on a footing of complete equality.

(c) Guarantees of execution of an international Convention.

The French note of the 5th December, 1933, defined certain general principles: the sanction must be proportionate to the violation.

<sup>11</sup> A reference presumably to Mr. Baldwin's speech in the House of Commons on November 28, 1934; see 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 883.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Volume VI, No. 487.

Eventual undertaking by the contracting Powers to proceed to measures of pressure, notably of an economic and financial character: assistance on the technical basis (manufacture of war material) to the State menaced by the fact of violation, &c.

Is England ready to collaborate in the establishment of a system of this character?

B. *In the West*—western security: in the conditions of modern war (aviation) there is no French security or English security; the problem is common to both.

There is the Locarno Agreement.

France recognises its full value. She knows that it represents a British promise. The idea has never occurred to her to question it or to suggest *fresh general engagements* which would add nothing to those very large ones which result from the Pact. But it is necessary to consider the possibilities of the working of Locarno in the conditions which are likely to be those of war to-morrow, as regards which it is by no means certain that it will be a long war.

Is it possible to improve the working of the Pact? Would the British Government agree to consider this point of view? It is for the British Ministers to say.

Are they ready, moreover, to adhere to the definition of the aggressor?

It is very certain that as it is drawn up, Locarno applies to all forms of aggression, but an *air* attack may be launched with such special suddenness as to call for an equally sudden reply. Can anything be done in this domain (air bases? Agreements between General Staffs?)? It goes without saying that France does not want *assistance*: what she would receive she is ready to give, if the least interest is shown in this respect.

In a more general way can the British Government contemplate furnishing, in a more or less semi-official form, any precisions in respect of conditions of military, air or naval intervention in execution of existing engagements?

### III.—*Consequences in Respect of Armaments*

It is desirable that a general convention should finally be reached.

It is evident that this Convention can only be reached on the basis of equality of rights and it is incontestable that the recognition of equality of rights should have as a corollary the abrogation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.

The question to be considered is whether it is possible to say that it should be abrogated *before* knowing what will be put in its place. The worst situation would be the beginning of an international negotiation at Geneva or elsewhere without there being at least a *preliminary agreement between France and England* on general lines: question of *figures*—level of armaments of the two countries (and of Italy) in relation to the level of German armaments—question of *methods*—control, &c.

It will be possible to say what is being abolished when it is known what will be put in its place.

The present conversation is only a prelude.

#### IV.—Conclusion

As an immediate question, and whilst the exchange of views is proceeding with a view to reach an agreement on the problems indicated above as a whole, the two Governments must be in agreement that their delegations should continue their efforts with a view to reach the draft of a limited convention, the negotiation of which can be continued without Germany (publicity and control of armaments, arms manufacture and trade in arms, budgetary publicity, &c.). In fact, the application of the plan drawn up in December by the Bureau of the Conference at Geneva.<sup>13</sup>

This is not a diversion but an indispensable step. If these questions are not, in fact, settled, a general convention is inconceivable, for the control which it will be necessary to draw up at Geneva is the previous condition to any operation of a system of guarantees of execution. Thus, whilst the negotiation on the subject of the pacts is proceeding, whilst the French and British Governments are pursuing their exchange of views on the general bases of a possible general convention, the definition of the projects actually under discussion will be completed, and on the technical basis thus realised it will be possible to construct a more general convention at the moment when the general principles which are its framework have been defined.

#### ANNEX IV TO No. 397

##### *French Draft of 'Basis of Discussion'*

Moved by the desire to strengthen the peace of the world by the development of a closer co-operation between all the European Powers, the French and British Ministers have proceeded in a spirit of the most friendly confidence to an examination of the whole of the general situation.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the Republic take note of the particularly important part played by the League of Nations in the recent international settlements, and congratulate themselves on the happy results acquired, due to the spirit of conciliation shown by the Governments taking part in those settlements; they are glad to reaffirm their close solidarity in the pursuit of such a policy.

The two Governments also take note of the great importance presented in the interests of the consolidation of peace, by the understanding realised in Rome in the recent Franco-Italian Agreements.

Having examined more especially the general problem of armaments of which it is necessary to pursue the study in all its aspects, they desire to reaffirm their agreement respecting the impossibility of recognising to Powers whose armaments are defined contractually by the Treaties of Peace, the right unilaterally to modify their obligations fixed by Convention. They are also agreed in recognising that a negotiation with all the interested Powers with a view to a new agreed settlement of the armaments and effectives limited by the Treaties of Peace could only be undertaken in the conditions laid down by Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and by the

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *F.R.U.S.* 1934, vol. i, pp. 187-8, 191-204, 211-15.



Declaration of the 11th December, 1932, that is to say, subject to adequate guarantees of security of both a technical and political kind, this condition implying notably the effective participation of Germany in the League of Nations and her adherence to the security pacts in the East and Centre of Europe.

The two Governments declare generally their firm conviction that a lasting improvement of political conditions constitutes the element of indispensable confidence which will exercise from the financial, economic and social point of view a decisive influence on the general amelioration of the life of the nations.

### No. 398

*Notes of Anglo-French Conversations, held at No. 10 Downing Street, S.W.1, on February 1-3, 1935<sup>1</sup>*

[C 893/55/18]\*

SECOND MEETING, FEBRUARY 1, 1935, at 3 p.m.<sup>2</sup>

The Meeting had under consideration the British and French drafts of the 'Basis of Discussion,' which appeared as Annexes I and IV to the Notes of the first Meeting.

THE PRIME MINISTER thought it very important to make a good declaration for propaganda purposes. He wanted to show that the two Governments were aiming at such an agreement with the nations of Europe as would counteract the tendency for each nation to arm itself up to its utmost and thereby increase the dangers of war. For that purpose they ought to declare in favour of such things as the execution of some Eastern Pact, and then deal with the German situation in language which would make it very difficult for Germany to say that they were to blame for the existing situation. They must not use any words which would enable Germany to say that. They ought to challenge Germany to enter with them upon the study of agreements which would make for security and tranquillise the mind of Europe.

M. LAVAL said that the framework which Mr. MacDonald had just outlined was perfectly satisfactory. The British and French Ministers were agreed on the substance. But the choice of words was important; and they must avoid ambiguities. There was no difficulty about the first paragraph of the British formula (Annex I to the Notes of the first Meeting); but he would like the final words omitted 'on the basis of the recognition of interests and rights which are common to every one of them'; as those words were ambiguous.

MR. EDEN suggested the substitution for the final words to which M. Laval objected of a sentence framed in the light of certain words just used by

<sup>1</sup> See also No. 397 and No. 400 below.

<sup>2</sup> The same British and French representatives were present as at the First Meeting (No. 397).

Mr. MacDonald. Mr. Eden's sentence would read: 'And to remove the threat of tendencies which, if unchecked, will lead to a race in armaments, and thereby increase the danger of war.'

M. LAVAL did not object to this sentence, but thought that it might be inserted later in the declaration.

MR. MACDONALD said that his purpose in using these words had been to secure something in the Declaration to show that they rebutted Germany's contention that she had the sovereign right to arm up to the point which she considered necessary. Mr. MacDonald wanted this insertion of a phrase to show that armaments should be a matter of international regulation and agreement.

M. LAVAL agreed with this in principle.

MR. MACDONALD then said that the earlier part of the Declaration might consist of the first paragraph of the British 'Basis of Discussion' (Annex I to the Notes of the morning Meeting), subject to an alteration as regards the final phrase, and the first three paragraphs of the French 'Basis of Discussion' (Annex IV to the morning Meeting).

The meeting then considered paragraph 2 of the British 'basis of discussion' (Annex I to the notes of the first meeting).

M. LAVAL said there was no difficulty about the first sentence, which read: 'His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the French Republic are agreed that neither Germany nor any other Power whose armaments have been defined by the Peace Treaties is entitled by unilateral action to modify these obligations.' He would, however, like to substitute for the 'two Governments' the respective Ministers.

The meeting then considered a new formula (Annex III to these notes), which was to be substituted for the remainder of the British 'basis of discussion' (Annex I to the notes of the first meeting), and also a French alternative to Section 3 of this new formula (this also appears in Annex III to these notes).

There was a long discussion on this new part of the formula, particularly as regards the two alternative drafts for Section 3 (the mention of the abrogation or replacement of the armaments provisions of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles).

M. LAVAL emphasised the difficulties with which he would meet should he return to Paris having admitted that he had considered the disappearance of Part V of the Treaty because of the new armaments settlement. He quite understood that the disappearance of Part V of the Treaty would be conditional, but he asked British Ministers to remember that he was confronted with a French public, which attached great importance to form and logic. If he admitted that he had considered in London the conditional disappearance of Part V, the French public would say that Part V was as dead as the reparation clauses; and he would be exposed to bitter attacks.

SIR JOHN SIMON regretted the difficulty which had arisen over the mention of Part V, as he understood that Sir George Clerk had negotiated with M. Laval in Paris the 'basis of discussion' (Annex I to the notes of the first

meeting), in which mention of Part V was made. Sir J. Simon quite understood that the word 'abrogation' was difficult for the French Ministers; and British Ministers had agreed to another word—'replacement.' But British opinion would regard, he was sure, mention of the disappearance of Part V as essential. Otherwise it would be thought that the agreement was unfair to Germany.

M. LAVAL reminded Sir J. Simon that in his conversations with Sir George Clerk he had accepted the 'Basis of Discussion' (Annex I to the first meeting) only as a basis of discussion and not as a communiqué. He had warned Sir G. Clerk that he would be obliged to raise certain points at the meeting in London.

M. Laval then reminded the meeting that M. Flandin had at the morning's discussion spoken about the conclusion of some convention providing against the danger of aerial attack as well as the agreement on the general formula. If it were possible to agree about an aerial convention, it would be much easier for him to accept the insertion of the reference to the disappearance of Part V of the Treaty, to which the British Ministers attached importance. If he could go back to Paris with such an agreement he would be able to calm French opinion, disturbed by the reference to the disappearance of Part V of the Treaty.

SIR J. SIMON understood that the proposed aerial agreement would include an undertaking by the French Government that in the event of air attack on Great Britain, the French air force would join in repelling that attack, whilst the British air force would join in repelling an attack upon France.

M. FLANDIN said that was quite right.

M. LAVAL realised that the moment had perhaps not yet come to talk about the aerial agreement. But he felt that he must give an explanation with regard to it.

He then read the proposal for an international air agreement, which appears as Annex I<sup>3</sup> to these notes.

He added that if he had such a text agreed between the British and French Governments, he would be able to do something with regard to Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. As well as Germany and Belgium he would like to bring Italy into the proposed agreement, though he would not ask the British Government to undertake obligations towards Italy. On the other hand, France would be quite ready to offer to Italy a regional aerial pact covering the whole of Central Europe.

M. Laval added that the document which he had read would, of course, have to be approved subsequently by the French technical experts. But it was sufficient for discussion and approval of the general principle.

M. FLANDIN said that the proposed aerial convention was a way of enabling the French Government to persuade French opinion to accept the legalisation of German rearmament. The French delegation could not accept such a reference, unless they could bring back to Paris a measure immediately

<sup>3</sup> This Annex contained the French text and an English translation of the French Government's proposals: only the latter is printed below.

improving conditions of security. In view of the menace implied both to France and England by the rearmament of Germany, that would be a measure proving the solidarity of the two countries. That the solidarity of the two countries should be extended to others would be excellent. But M. Flandin could not subordinate this immediate aerial agreement to an eventual general agreement.

M. LAVAL said that he had read the scheme of the aerial convention, which was an international convention. But he asked that the agreement of the British and French Governments should be noted in the communiqué issued when the present conversations closed.

At a later stage in the meeting the French delegation communicated a document defining the immediate agreement which they desired with the United Kingdom. This document appears as Annex II<sup>3</sup> to these notes.

MR. MACDONALD and SIR JOHN SIMON both stated that it would be necessary to consult the Cabinet and the technical advisers of His Majesty's Government on these proposals.

M. FLANDIN said that it seemed to him that the details of the application of the agreement were for the technicians, but that the principle of the agreement was primarily a political matter.

MR. MACDONALD said that it would be essential to consult the Cabinet on the principle. He warned the French Ministers that the Cabinet had not yet considered the matter at all. He said that the matter seemed to him of tremendous importance. It was one of the greatest decisions we could reach. It would be essential to prepare a memorandum in writing for the Cabinet.

All he could say then was that personally—and in saying this he was not speaking as Prime Minister at all, for he had no authority so to speak—he was greatly interested in the proposal.

M. LAVAL quite understood the position of the British Ministers. But it was difficult, and morally impossible for French Ministers, in the absence of all concrete guarantees, to promise Germany a new convention if there was not, as a corollary to it, some agreement between the United Kingdom and France. In those circumstances, it would be necessary to content themselves with a much more general communiqué.

He wished to point out that in the proposed Aerial Convention there was no new commitment for Great Britain. It was Locarno in the aerial sense. Great Britain was already in certain circumstances pledged to give France support under Locarno. A new convention would bring something to Great Britain and would ask her [?for] nothing in return.

MR. MACDONALD repeated that as Prime Minister his power of individual expression was limited. He could only say that individually the British Ministers present were very interested; but he could not give the French Delegation any further indication at all until he had consulted the Cabinet.

M. FLANDIN repeated that the proposed Convention implied no new undertaking for the United Kingdom. For the Locarno Treaty applied to the kind of British help for France which the Convention foreshadowed. So far as the United Kingdom was concerned, it was the interpretation of an

action to be taken in definite circumstances already envisaged by the Locarno Treaty.

What the proposed convention would do would be to give the United Kingdom reciprocal treatment to that afforded to France by Locarno.

The French Ministers certainly did not wish to embarrass the British Government by asking for new guarantees, but they must ask British Ministers to remember the difficulties of the French Government. The proposals put forward by the British Ministers would legalise German rearmament, conditionally, it was true, but they would legalise it all the same. French opinion would say that their Government had once again bowed before a *fait accompli* without any guarantee that there would be any sanction should there be new violations.

M. FLANDIN pointed out that the French Ministers had been careful to avoid raising the question of British military aid under Locarno.

MR. MACDONALD regretted that the British Delegation had not had more notice of this air proposal.

SIR JOHN SIMON repeated that consideration of the proposal by the Cabinet would be essential.

M. LAVAL understood the difficulties with which British Ministers were confronted; and that the matter must be referred to the Cabinet. He was ready to wait in London until the Cabinet had been able to meet.

After an adjournment the PRIME MINISTER informed the French Ministers that he had decided to hold a Cabinet meeting on the following morning (2nd February). This decision must naturally be treated with the greatest secrecy; and on no account must it be mentioned outside the meeting. Further, no reference whatever must be made to the Aerial Convention.

SIR JOHN SIMON repeated these two statements, and added that the communiqué which would be issued that evening must confine itself to a statement that there had been an examination of a number of questions.

MR. MACDONALD repeated the warning against indiscretions.

M. LAVAL said that, when questioned by his journalists, he would say that they had talked on a number of questions; but that the aerial question had not been mentioned at any moment.

The meeting then adjourned.

#### ANNEX I<sup>3</sup> TO No. 398

##### *Text of Scheme submitted by the French Delegation for an International Aerial Agreement*

(Translation)

The High Contracting Parties, recognising that the methods of aerial warfare render necessary especially prompt action in order to assure an effective repression of any aggression committed by way of the air, and recognising in consequence that the assistance assured to the State victim of such an aggression must be immediate, would agree to recommend the

conclusion of regional agreements of mutual assistance, the signatories of which would undertake, without prejudice to decisions which might be taken by the Council of the League of Nations under Article 16 of the Covenant, immediately to give the assistance of their air forces to whichever of them might be the victim of an unprovoked aggression by way of the air by one of the contracting parties.

## II

With a view to the regional application in Western Europe of the provision set out above, Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain (and Italy), signatories of the Treaty signed at Locarno on the 16th October, 1925, would undertake to give the immediate assistance of their aerial forces to whichever of the Contracting States might be the victim of an unprovoked aggression by way of the air on the part of another of the Contracting States.

### ANNEX II<sup>3</sup> TO No. 398

*Text of Formula communicated by the French Delegation providing for the immediate entry into force between the United Kingdom and France of the International Aerial Convention foreshadowed in Annex I*

(Translation)

Without waiting for the adherence of the German, Belgian and Italian Governments to the proposal made to them for the conclusion of a Pact of Mutual Assistance against an aggression by way of the air, the Government of the United Kingdom and the French Government agree to conform from henceforth in their mutual relations to the undertakings foreshadowed in the said proposal.

### ANNEX III TO No. 398

*Revised Draft of latter part of 'Basis of Discussion'*

But, recalling the principle of equality of rights as defined by the Declaration of the 11th December, 1932, they express their common desire to combine their efforts in such a way that there may be concluded between Germany and all the other interested Powers a general settlement freely negotiated between the contracting parties which will have more particularly the following results:—

1. The organisation of European security, particularly by means of the conclusion of pacts freely negotiated regarding Eastern and Central Europe.
2. The cancellation by Germany of her notice to withdraw from the League of Nations and an expression of her intention to resume active membership of the League.

3. The elaboration of further provisions regarding armaments generally which, in the case of Germany, will replace the provisions of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles which at present limit the arms and armed forces of Germany.

*The French Alternative to 3*

3. In consequence the conclusion, in conformity with the Declaration of the 11th December, 1932, regarding equality of rights within the régime of security, of a general settlement negotiated with all the Powers, including those whose armaments and effectives are at present limited by treaties.

**No. 399**

*Note by Sir J. Simon on a possible mutual guarantee treaty against air attack*<sup>1</sup>  
[C 892/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 1, 1935*

1. At the meeting with M. Flandin and M. Laval to-day (Friday)<sup>2</sup> a situation was reached which compelled the meeting of the Cabinet specially summoned for to-morrow. It will be remembered that the French Ministers came over after agreement had been negotiated between the two Foreign Offices on a basis for discussion. The formula is in telegram No. 18 from Paris of the 29th January.<sup>3</sup> But as the discussion to-day proceeded, it became obvious that the French Ministers were not able to accept the formula as it stood for the purpose of a public announcement, and that there was grave danger that this Franco-British meeting might end in a meaningless *communiqué*. This would be a disaster, and in view of the successful result of M. Laval's visit to Rome, a fiasco. But French Ministers (as we had reason to suspect) showed themselves greatly interested in a proposal for a new agreement, intended to be entered into by France, ourselves, Germany, Belgium and possibly Italy, for mutual protection against air attack. M. Laval produced a sketch of the sort of agreement which the French would be willing to make and wish us to approve. It is reproduced in Annex I.<sup>4</sup>

2. On this scheme it should be particularly observed:—

(1) Unlike Locarno, it provides this country with a definite and immediate protection against the risk of air attack. It therefore is not open to the objection raised against Locarno that we are entering into commitments for the benefit of others. On the contrary, it is directly meeting the principal preoccupation of British opinion on the subject of danger from the air.

<sup>1</sup> This Note was circulated as C.P. 34 (35) and discussed at a Cabinet meeting on February 2; cf. No. 400 below. Only the copy as printed for the Cabinet is preserved in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 398.

<sup>3</sup> No. 389.

<sup>4</sup> Not here reproduced: it is printed as Annex 1 to No. 398.

(2) While the French commitment to us is plain and new, our obligations under the agreement really are in their nature the same obligations that have already been accepted under Locarno. The difference is that in the event of non-provoked aggression by air on France by Germany, we should be bound to intervene with our air force *immediately*.

(3) It may be asked why the French should show themselves so eager to undertake new burdens if we are not really undertaking anything new. The answer seems to be that the French feel that they must present to their public opinion a new assurance in some detail from us, even though it is within our Locarno commitments. And of course, it is the fact that what we are asked to do in return is more precise.

3. There is also attached (Annex II)<sup>5</sup> a draft which has been independently prepared by Sir William Malkin and which covers some points not mentioned in the French sketch. For example, shipping in home waters must be protected from aerial attack as well as the soil of the country itself. Again, it is important to make clear that the provisions of the new agreement would not apply in favour of a signatory which had gone to war in breach of its obligations.

4. The Cabinet will certainly feel that details in various connexions have to be thoroughly studied and worked out, but the immediate question is one of principle. Can we indicate to French Ministers before they return to Paris that His Majesty's Government welcome the possibility of joining in an agreement on these lines with the other Powers named, and are prepared to enter into a study of its terms and methods without any delay? M. Laval has offered to stay in this country longer than he had intended, say, until next Tuesday,<sup>6</sup> in order that we may have the opportunity of considering what our answer will be to the French proposal.

5. While this most important proposal must be considered on its merits, it is necessary to appreciate that unless we can give a favourable reply to the French suggestion, we are not going to get the French to adopt the formula recently discussed between us. The adoption of some such formula as a public declaration resulting from the present Anglo-French conference is the essential condition of an approach to Germany with any prospect of getting a successful issue. Even now, the chance may be slight (see Sir E. Phipps's telegram No. 31<sup>7</sup> of the 31st January), but it will make an enormous difference to public opinion and to the future if the advance is made, with the result that should Germany reject it, she will be in the wrong. If we make no effective advance, the German case is strengthened. And this appears to be absolutely the last time when such a procedure has any practical value. If we can get no terms with Germany, then we have to face rearmament on our own part on an increasing scale with financial burdens corresponding and with political results which need not be described.

6. I therefore urge that we should give to the French Ministers an assurance in some such terms as are indicated above in paragraph 4. No one expects

<sup>5</sup> Not printed.

<sup>6</sup> February 5.

<sup>7</sup> No. 396.



us to do more at this stage. But this will enable French Ministers to include in the declaration resulting from the present meetings, the offer of the abrogation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles as one of the simultaneous terms of a general settlement. This is absolutely vital, as it seems to me, if our own attitude is to be justified and if agreement with Germany is to be possible.<sup>8</sup>

J. S.

<sup>8</sup> The formula agreed by the Cabinet on February 2, based on a draft prepared by Sir J. Simon, read as follows:

'In the course of these meetings, the French and British Ministers have been impressed by the special dangers to peace created by modern developments in the air, the misuse of which might lead to sudden aerial aggression by one country upon another, and have given consideration to the possibility of provision being made against these dangers by a reciprocal regional agreement between certain Powers. It is suggested that the signatories would undertake immediately to give the assistance of their air forces to whichever of them might be the victim of unprovoked aerial aggression by one of the contracting parties. The French and British Ministers, on behalf of their respective Governments, found themselves in agreement that a mutual arrangement of this kind would go far to ensure immunity from sudden attacks from the air to the participating countries and they resolved to invite (Italy), Germany and Belgium to consider with them whether such a convention might not be promptly negotiated.'

#### No. 400

*Notes of Anglo-French Conversations, held at No. 10 Downing Street, S.W.1, on February 1-3, 1935<sup>1</sup>*

[C 893/55/18]\*

THIRD MEETING, FEBRUARY 2, 1935, at 3 p.m.<sup>2</sup>

THE PRIME MINISTER informed the meeting that there had been a special meeting of the British Cabinet that morning.<sup>3</sup> The Cabinet had had before it a translation of the paper handed in by M. Laval on the preceding day (Annex 1 to Notes of Second Meeting) regarding a proposed international aerial convention.

There had been a full discussion in the Cabinet, first as to the proposal itself, what it meant, what it might achieve, &c.; and secondly how the situation should be handled at the moment.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that an explanation had been given to the British Cabinet that the French Ministers had stated that the announcement which it was hoped they and the British Ministers might agree upon to cover the matters dealt with in the formula known as 'Basis of Discussion' (see Annexes 1 and 4 to Notes of First Meeting and discussion at Second Meeting) would be materially affected by the view which British Ministers took of the French proposal for an aerial convention. In particular, it had been explained that

<sup>1</sup> See also Nos. 397 and 398.

<sup>2</sup> The same British and French representatives were present as at the First and Second Meetings.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 399.

the French Ministers found it difficult to make a reference to the disappearance of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles in the announcement unless some advance could be made as regards their air proposal.

The Cabinet had examined the air proposal very sympathetically. The members of the Cabinet, for many of whom the air proposal was quite new, had all been greatly impressed by it and had appreciated its importance and significance. There had been a feeling that one of its great merits was that it might act as a deterrent against bombing attacks; and from that point of view the Cabinet felt that it should be most carefully and sympathetically considered. All the British Ministers shared M. Flandin's views respecting the special danger to peace constituted by the possibility of a sudden aggression by way of the air.

On the other hand, the British Cabinet was bound to consider all the implications of the proposal. In what respects did it go beyond Locarno? Sir John Simon had had the impression on the preceding day that, though it was certainly true that it would involve for Britain immediate action with the Air Force, it would not involve her in any class of case not foreseen by Locarno. Therefore for Britain it did not imply an extension of the Locarno commitments. Sir John Simon felt it necessary to be quite clear on that point.

On the other hand, the British Cabinet had taken the view that it would be a very grave technical [?tactical] mistake to allow this proposal to be represented as a combined Franco-British proposal against Germany. The chances of its acceptance by Germany would thereby be diminished. It was very desirable to deal with the proposal in such a way that Belgium, Germany and Italy (if desired) would all have the opportunity to be consulted and agree about it. On the assumption that it was clear that that was the spirit in which the proposal was put forward, there was in principle much sympathy with it in the British Cabinet.

Without more material it was difficult to be more definite to-day about the proposal; but, under that reserve, its importance was recognised by everyone, both to the United Kingdom and to France.

The British Ministers were much concerned to be sure that if the British and French Governments could together agree upon something of this kind, there should be a declaration of what was proposed in the general sphere, and a statement that the proposed aerial convention would involve invitations to Belgium, Germany and possibly Italy, to consider it and to see if it could be worked out.

M. FLANDIN thought that Sir John Simon's statement showed that British Ministers were in a position to meet the French Delegation on a number of points, especially on the fundamentals of the question; but there was some difference as regards procedure.

First, as regards the points raised by Sir John Simon, he could at once give an assurance that the French Delegation were agreed that for Britain the proposed agreement did not imply an extension of the Locarno obligations. He agreed with Sir John Simon that only the cases covered by Locarno were in question.

What seemed important to the French Delegation was that in the cases covered by Locarno the Contracting Parties should be freed from the anxiety caused them by the danger of a sudden aerial attack, when they would be hampered by the necessity of carrying out the Locarno procedure. But no extension of Locarno was contemplated for Great Britain.

M. Flandin desired further to emphasise that it would be a mistake to allow this proposal to be represented as directed against Germany. That was never the intention of the French Government; and the proposal must not be considered as directed against anyone. It must be considered by everyone as a measure adopted to prevent war and not to provoke it. M. Flandin did not therefore think that on the fundamentals there was any difference between the two Delegations.

As regards the details, the original French proposal had foreshadowed the adherence of Germany, Belgium and Italy. Therefore, there was no difference between the two Delegations there.

The real question to be decided was whether the agreement should be finally concluded before the consultation as to details which should take place subsequently; or whether the consultation as to details should take place before the agreement was finally concluded.

The French Ministers infinitely preferred the first of these alternatives, because they did not want any bargaining about the conclusion of the proposed agreement. Further, it was difficult to see how secrecy could long be preserved.

The position of the French Delegation was very difficult and embarrassing. They were being questioned by their journalists; and they could not keep silence indefinitely. Immediately the proposal became public, there would be all kinds of discussions, requests for explanations, complications, &c.

If, then, the British Ministers still thought that the final conclusion of the agreement must be subordinated to certain conditions, it would be desirable at least to announce an agreement in principle.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that one point had not been mentioned by M. Flandin. He would like to know whether, if they could agree upon a suitable announcement on the air question, the French Ministers would be able to agree on the other subject matter discussed on the preceding day, including a statement that in the general formula there would be some reference to the disappearance of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.

M. LAVAL expressed much gratification at Sir John Simon's account of the meeting of the British Cabinet. He noted that the British Ministers attached importance and significance to the proposed aerial convention, and that they agreed with M. Flandin's view that its effect might be to lessen the danger of sudden air attacks. It was very important that on this point the two Governments were entirely agreed.

Sir John Simon had also emphasised the importance which the British Cabinet attached to the limitation of the proposed aerial agreement to cases foreseen by Locarno. There was no difficulty on this point.

Sir John Simon had also said that if the British Cabinet was generally agreed on the principle, it was necessary to make very considerable reserves about the details. The French Ministers did not object to that.

Sir John Simon had said that the British Government attached importance to the insertion in the general communiqué of some reference to the abrogation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. M. Laval thought that the French and British delegations could now come much nearer on this point.

It seemed then that on fundamentals the two delegations were agreed. But M. Laval would like a clear and definite public statement about the air agreement. He would like to recall all the difficulties with which he and Mr. Eden had met at Geneva when deciding the proper moment to make public the agreement about the Saar; and he emphasised the reaction of their action upon the favourable manner in which that agreement had been received and the swiftness with which the two delegations had acted.

He would ask the Prime Minister and Sir John Simon to consider very carefully the terms of the public declaration on the aerial convention. If the French Ministers returned to Paris only with a hope of the Four-Power Aerial Convention, and having accepted, in certain circumstances, the disappearance of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, he feared the results on French opinion.

The British Ministers had said that it was necessary to bring Germany into the proposed aerial convention. Then, in M. Laval's opinion, it was very desirable to consult Berlin at once before press campaigns began in all the capitals. Would it not be possible to indicate in the public communiqué recording the results of their labours that the British Ambassador at Berlin had already been instructed to make a communication to the German Government on this matter?

M. Laval then repeated that if the public declaration respecting the aerial agreement was sufficiently definite, the French Ministers would be satisfied. Otherwise, it would be very difficult for them to consider the mention of the abrogation of Part V of the treaty.

SIR JOHN SIMON agreed with M. Laval that it was very desirable to consult the German Government as soon as possible, so that they should not learn of what had happened from outside, but he felt that it would not be possible for the British Government, which, as a Government, had only learned of the proposed agreement that morning, and had not yet had time to consult the Dominions Governments, to announce within a few hours a formal definite engagement respecting the aerial convention which the British and French Ministers desired to work out.

Sir John Simon then handed in a draft of that part of the communiqué (see Annex) which would refer to the proposed aerial agreement; and this draft, after certain alterations, was eventually embodied in the communiqué as finally agreed (see Annex).

After some further discussion M. FLANDIN emphasised the importance which the French Ministers attached to ensuring that even if Germany refused to participate in the aerial agreement, that agreement would still

mature as between the other Governments. He particularly wanted to know what would be the position if Germany refused to participate. There would be great difficulties for the French Government should they have abandoned their theory of non-legalisation of German rearmament and yet have obtained nothing in exchange. On the other hand, if it was clear that even if Germany refused to participate in the aerial convention it would still mature, the position would be one which M. Flandin could defend.

SIR JOHN SIMON pointed out that if the British and French Governments made it clear at once that whether or not Germany participated in the convention it made no real difference, since they would conclude it in any case, this would certainly have a most unfortunate effect upon Germany, who would be most unlikely, in such circumstances, to accede to the convention. M. Flandin had asked what would be the position if Germany refused to accede to the convention. Sir John Simon considered that in that event a new situation would arise which would justify a further consultation, but he could not agree that even in that event the British and French Governments would not have made a most important declaration in this matter.

A long discussion then took place on the first part of the communiqué, which is annexed to these notes. During this discussion M. LAVAL emphasised the difficulties of the situation which would face him in Paris should he consent to the insertion in the communiqué of any words which would suggest that Germany could have a new military statute without participating in the proposals for the organisation of security.

SIR JOHN SIMON emphasised the importance of the principle of simultaneity.

The draft of a communiqué (see Annex) was then agreed, subject to final revision, which it was decided should take place after an adjournment for dinner.

After the adjournment, a revised draft of the communiqué (see Annex) was read; and a discussion took place on the nature of the reference which should be made to Italy. It was eventually decided that it should be stated that invitations would be sent to Italy, Germany and Belgium to consider the negotiation of the aerial convention; and that in the commentary issued to the press it should be explained that these three Powers were all signatories of Locarno.

It was decided to hold a further meeting at 4.30 p.m. on the following day, the 3rd February, so that there might be a final reading of the communiqué.

M. LAVAL asked that in the communication sent to the German Government the whole text of the communiqué should be included and not merely a summary.

SIR JOHN SIMON then said that in these circumstances there could be no publication of any communiqué that night. It would be necessary to say to the press that the French and British Ministers had continued their conversations until a late hour and were still in discussion when they adjourned until the following afternoon. Sir John Simon added that he understood that

M. Laval would do no more than tell the French journalists that there was no communiqué because one had not yet been agreed, but there would be a communiqué on the following afternoon.

M. LAVAL said that he would add that the French and British Ministers were in agreement on essentials, but that he was unable to say any more, as there were other Governments who must be given information.

(The meeting then adjourned.)<sup>4</sup>

#### ANNEX TO No. 400

##### *Draft Communiqué<sup>5</sup>*

The object of the meeting between the French and British Ministers, which has been taking place in London, was to promote the peace of the world by closer European co-operation, in a spirit of most friendly confidence, and to remove those tendencies which, if unchecked, are calculated to lead to a race in armaments and to increase the dangers of war.

With this object in view the French and British Ministers proceeded to an examination of the general situation. They took note of the particularly important part played by the League of Nations in the recent settlements

<sup>4</sup> The fourth and last meeting was held at 4.30 p.m. on February 3. Neither the Prime Minister nor M. Flandin attended this meeting but with these exceptions the same British and French representatives were present as at the first three meetings. A note on the proceedings read as follows:

'The meeting had before it the French and English texts of the communiqué in its final form.

'The two texts were approved and are annexed to these notes.

'The meeting was informed that the British Ambassadors in Berlin, Rome and Brussels were being asked immediately to communicate copies of the communiqué to the German, Italian and Belgian Governments. It was agreed that the French Ambassadors in the three capitals should act with their British colleagues.

'The discussions then concluded.'

The English text of the approved communiqué, dated February 3, 1935, was printed in *The Times*, February 4, p. 12, and later in Cmd. 4798 of 1935. The final text was the same as the draft in the Annex to No. 400 except for a few minor drafting amendments and the two following changes: (a) at the end of the second paragraph, after 'settlements', an additional sentence read: 'They declare their determination to pursue, both as regards the problems of their own countries and of the League, policies guided by the same methods of conciliation and co-operation.' (b) the first two sentences in the fourth paragraph, beginning 'The French and British Ministers' and ending 'other Powers', were omitted and the following wording was substituted: 'The British and French Ministers hope that the encouraging progress thus achieved may now be continued by means of the direct and effective co-operation of Germany. They are agreed that neither Germany nor any other Power whose armaments have been defined by the Peace Treaties is entitled by unilateral action to modify these obligations. But they are further agreed that nothing would contribute so much to restore confidence and the prospects of peace among nations than a general settlement freely negotiated between Germany and the other Powers.'

The amendments were telephoned to Berlin, Brussels, and Rome, in unnumbered telegrams at 6.30 p.m. on February 3.

<sup>5</sup> The text of this draft communiqué was telegraphed at 2.15 a.m. on February 3 to Berlin (No. 21), Brussels (No. 4), and Rome (No. 77). For the final text see note 4 above.

of certain international problems and welcomed the successful results as evidence of the conciliatory spirit of all the Governments taking part in those settlements.

With reference to the Franco-Italian agreements recently reached in Rome, the British Ministers, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, cordially welcomed the declaration by which the French and Italian Governments have asserted their intention to develop the traditional friendship which unites the two nations, and associated His Majesty's Government with the intention of the French and Italian Governments to collaborate in a spirit of mutual trust in the maintenance of general peace. The British Ministers expressed the congratulations of His Majesty's Government on the conclusion of the Rome Agreement regarding Central Europe, and made it clear that, as a consequence of the declarations made by His Majesty's Government in conjunction with the French and Italian Governments on the 17th February and the 27th September last, His Majesty's Government consider themselves to be among the Powers which will, as provided in the Rome Agreement, consult together if the independence and integrity of Austria are menaced.

The French and British Ministers are agreed that neither Germany nor any other Power whose armaments have been defined by the Peace Treaties, is entitled by unilateral action to modify these obligations. But they are further agreed that the restoration of confidence and the prospects of peace amongst nations would be most effectively promoted by a general settlement reached by free negotiation between Germany and the other Powers. This general settlement would make provision for the organisation of security in Europe, particularly by means of the conclusion of pacts, freely negotiated between all the interested parties, and ensuring mutual assistance in Eastern Europe and the system foreshadowed in the Rome *procès-verbal* for Central Europe. Simultaneously, under the head of armaments, in conformity with the Declaration of the 11th December, 1932, regarding equality of rights in a system of security, this settlement would establish agreements regarding armaments generally which, in the case of Germany, would replace the provisions of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles at present limiting the arms and armed forces of Germany. It would also be part of the general settlement that Germany should resume her place in the League of Nations with a view to active membership. His Majesty's Government and the French Government trust that the other Governments concerned may share these views.

In the course of these meetings, the French and British Ministers have been impressed by the special dangers to peace created by modern developments in the air, the misuse of which might lead to sudden aerial aggression by one country upon another, and have given consideration to the possibility of provision being made against these dangers by a reciprocal regional agreement between certain Powers. It is suggested that the signatories would undertake immediately to give the assistance of their air forces to whichever of them might be the victim of unprovoked aerial aggression by one of the contracting parties. The French and British Ministers, on behalf of their

respective Governments, found themselves in agreement that a mutual arrangement of this kind for Western Europe would go far to operate as a deterrent to aggression and to ensure immunity from sudden attacks from the air, and they resolved to invite Italy, Germany and Belgium to consider with them whether such a convention might not be promptly negotiated. They earnestly desire that all the countries concerned should appreciate that the object of this proposal is to reinforce peace—the sole aim pursued by the two Governments. The Governments of France and Great Britain declare themselves ready to resume their consultations without delay after having received the replies of the other interested Powers.

**No. 401**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 2, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 71 Telegraphic [R 751/1/67]*

ROME, February 2, 1935, 1.40 a.m.

Conversation which I had with Signor Mussolini this evening<sup>1</sup> turned on German attitude towards Eastern and Rome Pacts. His Excellency thought it most unlikely that Germany would ever agree to come into the former instrument which he considered highly complicated but he was hopeful as regards the latter.

German Ambassador here had enquired yesterday what was intended by term 'non interference in internal affairs'. To this Signor Mussolini replied that in his view and speaking on the spur of the moment any action which Government of a country considered likely to lead to disorder or of a subversive character should be so considered. He deduced from this conversation that Germany was seriously considering accession to Rome Pact.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was drafted on February 1.

**No. 402**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 2, 10.35 a.m.)*  
*No. 34 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 888/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 2, 1935

My telegrams Nos. 32<sup>1</sup> and 33.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that press have been instructed to maintain attitude of extreme reserve. 'Times' correspondent asked Minister for Foreign Affairs how long

<sup>1</sup> Berlin telegram No. 32 of February 2 said that all the German newspapers had published long telegrams from London describing the progress of the Anglo-French negotiations, but without editorial comment.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram reported that the first of two articles by Lord Lothian, printed in *The Times* of January 31 and February 1, had appeared in a textual translation or a full summary in almost all German newspapers.



he proposed to keep silence and received reply to the effect German government could naturally express no opinion on matters of which they were still in ignorance.

**No. 403**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 2, 10.50 a.m.)*  
*No. 72 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 889/55/18]*

ROME, February 2, 1935

My telegram No. 71.<sup>1</sup>

I ought to add that Signor Mussolini speaking of recognition of German rearmament expressed the view that apart from questions relating to the two Pacts, Germany's return to the League of Nations must form one of the conditions for such recognition.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> No. 401.

**No. 404**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*  
*No. 18 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 897/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 2, 1935, 4 p.m.

1. I am most anxious that the German Government should have no excuse for taking up the position that as the result of the Anglo-French conversations now going on, they have been presented with a *Diktat* and have been denied the essentials of equal treatment. I am therefore telegraphing to you now in advance of any conclusions hereafter reached in these London conversations, so that if later in the day or early next week our discussions with the French Ministers result in a public announcement, you may be able to give some information to the German Government before the public announcement is made. We shall thus be able later on to telephone to request you to make an immediate communication on the lines below indicated, though it may be necessary to modify these in the light of negotiations still proceeding here.

2. In the first place, I should like you when the time comes, to impress upon the German Government that we have throughout been at pains to secure that the various aspects of a general settlement should be treated concurrently and that Germany's right to take an equal part in the working out of this general settlement is fully acknowledged without antecedent condition. For example, we are not for a moment suggesting that Germany's return to Geneva can be a preliminary condition, but on the contrary that the intention to resume her place in the League of Nations should be part

of a general arrangement which includes the replacement of the armaments clauses of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles by fair and adequate agreements in respect of both arms and security which would be applicable to and accepted by all parties.

3. In the second place, the proposal to negotiate an air convention between France, Germany, Belgium and ourselves under which the signatories would undertake immediately to give the assistance of their air forces to whichever of them might be the victim of unprovoked aerial aggression by any one of them, is a proposal which we favour in principle but which we should wish to discuss with all the Powers named on equal terms. It ought not to be misrepresented as settled without consultation with some power or as a combination against any one of them. You will observe that the proposal involves the implication that Germany has a military air force and, indeed, in certain events defined in the proposed agreement, is invited to use it and this in itself is, as it seems to me, an application of the principle of equal status. My own conviction is that if the proposal was reasonably received, this would necessarily involve and bring about negotiation between Germany and the other Powers concerned which would contribute to the pacification of Europe and the improvement of relations all round. I am most anxious, therefore, that when any announcement is made from London on the subject, it should be received in Berlin in the right spirit.

4. What I have said above is all entirely provisional and may require modification in the light of discussion still to take place here. But it will enable you to prepare yourself for the sort of communication which I may have to ask you to make at very short notice a little later on.

#### No. 405

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 3, 12.35 p.m.)  
No. 37 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 900/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, *February 3, 1935*

General von Reichenau told Belgian Minister last night that Germany desired an arms convention, but it would be in every respect on a different basis to that contemplated last Spring. He added that German Government did *not* wish to raise difficult and ticklish questions of demilitarized zone. Count Kerchové expressed satisfaction at this and told General that Belgium attached vital importance to demilitarized zone and would consider any violation thereof a 'casus belli', and as necessitating immediate consultation by Locarno Powers.

No. 406

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 3, 7.5 p.m.)*

*No. 3 Telegraphic [C 903/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BRUSSELS, February 3, 1935, 5.29 p.m.

Your telegram No. 3.<sup>1</sup>

I informed Minister for Foreign Affairs confidentially of provisional text.

While he could not of course speak officially unofficially he welcomed the result as a further sign of Anglo-French entente in its quality of a precondition of peace in general and Belgian security in particular. Further he welcomed proposed agreement regarding aerial aggression with great personal sympathy.<sup>2</sup>

Subject to your informing me to the contrary I told him I saw no objection to his natural wish to issue press notice to-morrow to the effect that His Majesty's Ambassador had naturally kept him au courant of progress of negotiations in London.

The 'Independence Belge' in particular has shown intelligent anticipation of text under heading 'England and France are going to sign a defensive Aerial Alliance.'

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram of 1.30 a.m. on February 3, not printed, Sir J. Simon instructed Sir E. Ovey to inform the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs of the text of the draft Anglo-French communiqué (see No. 400, note 5) before the final text appeared in the press on Monday, February 4.

<sup>2</sup> For M. Hyman's report of this conversation see *D.D.B.*, vol. iii, No. 150.

No. 407

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 3, 5.45 p.m.)*

*No. 38 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 901/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, February 3, 1935

Your telegram No. 18.<sup>1</sup>

I have just made preliminary and provisional verbal communication to Minister for Foreign Affairs in the sense of above. I also read him quickly text of communiqué explaining, however, that this might undergo certain alterations after this afternoon's meeting.<sup>2</sup> I urged strongly that German press should not adopt hostile attitude towards proposed Air Convention. His Excellency promised to do his best in this sense. Meanwhile I did not find him opposed in principle to the idea of an Air Convention.

I will telegraph further after seeing the Chancellor.

<sup>1</sup> No. 404.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 400, note 4.

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 4, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 39 Telegraphic [C 902/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, February 3, 1935, 10.45 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

As instructed by your telegram No. 20<sup>2</sup> I handed to the Chancellor this evening in the presence of the French Ambassador and of Baron von Neurath the definitive text of Anglo-French communiqué. Baron von Neurath had already told the Chancellor of arguments advanced in your telegram No. 18<sup>3</sup> but I again referred to them briefly. I strongly urged desirability of reserve in German press tomorrow particularly in regard to proposed air convention and Chancellor promised to do this. He added, however, that he hoped British and French press would not celebrate Anglo-French agreement as a victory against Germany. Both French Ambassador and I denied that we had any such intention; what we all wished was that Germany should again resume conversations with us as an equal partner.

Chancellor and Baron von Neurath took special exception to reference in communiqué to Eastern Pact and the former declared that he would not risk the life of one German soldier in a Russo-Polish conflict. He referred to great sacrifice he was making (a) in renouncing Alsace Lorraine, which France had never done after her defeat in 1871, and (b) in accepting recognition of demilitarized zone. France showed no gratitude for this, but always asked for still further sacrifices from Germany. If this continued, and here he raised his voice, Germany would be obliged finally to declare that that zone must be abolished or at least made reciprocal. He indicated that in any case German acceptance of zone was not going to be eternal.

Like Baron von Neurath, the Chancellor did not seem to dislike the idea of air convention, indeed he said it was the least unsatisfactory part of the communiqué. He even promised to consider it sympathetically.

The Chancellor promised to examine the whole of the document with the greatest care before giving us his reply.

Repeated to Rome No. 14.

<sup>1</sup> No. 407.

<sup>2</sup> In this telegram of 1.40 a.m. on February 3, not printed, Sir J. Simon referred to the Anglo-French communiqué and said: 'I am, of course, anxious that you should have an opportunity of communicating these proposals to the German Government, with commentary in the sense of my telegram above mentioned [i.e. No. 404], before they appear in the press on Monday morning (February 4). Sir E. Phipps should therefore make an appointment with Herr Hitler or Herr Neurath on Sunday evening at the latest.' Herr Hitler agreed to receive the Ambassador at 7 p.m. on February 3.

<sup>3</sup> No. 404.

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 4, 9 a.m.)*  
*No. 76 Telegraphic [C 907/55/18]*

ROME, February 3, 1935, 12 midnight

Your telegram No. 77.<sup>1</sup>

My French colleague and I called on Signor Suvich this evening and gave him the definitive text of agreement.<sup>2</sup> I said I was instructed<sup>3</sup> to express hope of His Majesty's Government that this accord would meet with approval of Italian Government. Signor Suvich showed particular appreciation of passages relating to Rome agreements and to Austria. He said he thought what had been effected in London was good. He did not, however, altogether understand part relating to a special convention on air attack. How was it possible to distinguish between war in the air and war on land and sea? For instance, if a general agreement were made and supposing Germany were to attack France we should all have to come to the latter's assistance and would this not mean a general war? The air could not be isolated. I said to him that I had not any information beyond what was contained in present text of the views and intentions of the two governments. In order, however, to dissipate his assumption that the air agreement would be of a general character including both Great Britain and Italy I thought it wise to add that speaking purely personally I believed that what was suggested might be a development of Locarno system with addition that each guaranteeing Power would itself be guaranteed by France and Germany as regards air but I repeated that this was a purely personal opinion. I understood Signor Grandi and Monsieur Laval had had conversation on the whole subject and no doubt Italian Government would shortly receive telegram from the former. My French colleague stated that he expected to have instructions on this point and to be in a position to communicate them to Signor Suvich either tomorrow or Tuesday.<sup>4</sup>

Signor Suvich also observed that he did not think Germans could properly take objection to what was now proposed on the ground that it was a Diktat. Except for the part of the agreement relating to the air on which Signor Suvich implied he would like further information, my general impression was that he considered the agreement as most satisfactory.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 400, note 5.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.*, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> These instructions were contained in Foreign Office telegram No. 76 of 1.10 a.m. on February 3.

<sup>4</sup> February 5.

**No. 410**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 4, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 77 Telegraphic [C 908/55/18]*

ROME, February 3, 1935, 12 midnight

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

The only fear Signor Suvich expressed was that French Ministers may find on their return to Paris that they have gone too far in the matter of concessions to Germany and may fail to carry parliamentary and public opinion with them.

<sup>1</sup> No. 409.

**No. 411**

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 4, 12.50 p.m.)*  
*No. 4 Telegraphic [C 917/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BRUSSELS, February 4, 1935, 11.50 a.m.

My telegram No. 3.<sup>1</sup>

I completed démarche by sending Minister for Foreign Affairs final text of communiqué<sup>2</sup> last night.

Neither His Excellency nor I are quite clear whether further formal invitation to Belgian Government to furnish their views is to follow. In any case His Excellency undertook to consult his Government at today's cabinet meeting. Please instruct.

<sup>1</sup> No. 406.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 400, note 4.

**No. 412**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 4, 1 p.m.)*  
*No. 40 Telegraphic [C 921/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 4, 1935, 12.50 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Chancellor as usual maintained that it was the ex-allies and not Germany who had violated their undertaking to disarm even after their military experts had reported complete disarmament of Germany. (I denied that there had been any specific undertaking). He again declared his readiness to abolish all use of bombs or gas etc. behind the battle lines: he here laid special stress upon the awful mortality such a use would cause amongst the women and children.

<sup>1</sup> No. 408.

The Chancellor turning towards the French Ambassador could not resist pointing out to him how much easier it would have been to reach an arms convention last year when the German army was still only 100,000 strong whereas now it was getting more and more difficult to get an agreement.

When Herr Hitler referred to demilitarized zone I derived the distinct impression that he became threatening and that German acquiescence in existence of that zone would only last as long as the German army was in the process of expansion and not a day longer.<sup>2</sup> He seemed to find an elfish pleasure in the discomfiture of my French colleague at this stage, in effect general attitude resembled rather that of a victor than of a defeated party.

When the Chancellor declared his unwillingness to join Eastern Pact my French colleague urged that he would state in writing his specific objections thereto and would point out that it was the mutual assistance clause that he chiefly disliked. In that case the German reply might contain some substitute for that clause. Herr Hitler promised to furnish a reasoned reply to this and to the other points raised in the communiqué.

<sup>2</sup> A minute of February 5 by Sir R. Vansittart read: 'I entirely agree with Sir E. Phipps that the present intention of the German Govt. is to respect the demilitarised zone only so long as they have not rearmed to the top of their bent. This will raise very grave complications in Europe—and for us. It will be better to do what we can to prevent the situation from arising. The News Dept. sh[oul]d therefore begin early to hint discreetly and with unbelief at the existence of such an intention. . . .' He added, however: 'It will be best to postpone anything of this nature till we see better how we fare with our new proposals. In any case it wd be necessary to begin very cautiously.' This minute was initialled, 'J.S. Feb. 7.'

### No. 413

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 78 Telegraphic [C 907/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 4, 1935, 3.50 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 74<sup>1</sup> and 76.<sup>2</sup>

I approve your language in latter telegram above mentioned.

You will see from the communiqué that the French and British Ministers at London only considered the application of the Air Agreement to Western Europe. But this does not mean in any way that they had lost sight of the fact that in some form the plan must be so constructed as to include all the Locarno Powers. It is for this reason that the communiqué definitely states that Italy is one of the countries to be consulted as regards its negotiation. You will appreciate the importance of the question whether we contemplate entering into completely new commitments. Under Locarno, Italy and Britain have no commitments to each other.

In the view of the French and British Ministers the proposed Air Agreement as applicable to Western Europe would involve the extension to Great

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> No. 409.

Britain of the guarantee of France, Germany and Belgium. But it was not suggested that either Italy or Great Britain should be asked to extend the radius of their obligations under Locarno by guaranteeing each other.

On the other hand, I appreciate the importance that all the Locarno Powers should co-operate in the new agreement, and I hope it may be possible so to construct the latter that, in effect, Great Britain will exchange guarantees with Germany, France and Belgium, while Italy will exchange similar guarantees with France and Germany.

It will be for consideration whether such a system can best be formulated in a single convention or in two conventions.

In any case I should be most grateful for any impressions or suggestions that the Italian Government may be prepared to give us at this early stage.

Repeated to Paris, No. 25; Berlin, No. 22; and Brussels, No. 5.

#### No. 414

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 5, 4.25 p.m.)*

*No. 6 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 973/55/18]*

BRUSSELS, February 5, 1935

My telegram No. 5.<sup>1</sup>

Official communiqué to press states that Belgian cabinet after hearing report from the Minister for Foreign Affairs on London conversations, has expressed satisfaction at the understanding reached between Great Britain and France, as well as between France and Italy, with a view to the reinforcement of peace. Further, the cabinet unanimously recognised that it would be to Belgium's interest to participate in the negotiation of a convention which would ensure military assistance in western Europe in the event of aerial attack.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of February 4, not printed, reported that Belgian press comments on the Anglo-French communiqué of February 3 'are almost all universally favourable and in many cases enthusiastic'.

#### No. 415

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 27 Telegraphic [C 990/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 5, 1935, 9.10 p.m.

My telegram to Rome No. 78.<sup>1</sup>

You should inform the French Government of action taken in Rome. I think it would be well to let them know that we foresee considerable difficulty in presenting to Italian Government any idea of accepting an Air

<sup>1</sup> No. 413.



Agreement within any framework other than that of Locarno. Indeed we feel that such a suggestion will be so unwelcome to the Italian Government that the French Government would be well advised to reconsider it. It is quite clear from an interview between the Italian Ambassador and Sir R. Vansittart today<sup>2</sup> that the Italian Government will feel that the 'structure of Locarno' should be maintained. I think both French Government and H.M.G. should take due note of this.

See my telegram to Rome No. 83<sup>2</sup> of today.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 416 below.

## No. 416

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 83 Telegraphic [C 990/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 5, 1935, 9.10 p.m.*

Following from Sir R. Vansittart.

*Private*

The Italian Ambassador came to see me this morning and emphasised that he was speaking privately. He said that he felt quite sure that his Government would be insistent that there should be not two agreements but one agreement concluded between the five Locarno Powers 'with the same obligations and advantages'. Signor Grandi himself also felt strongly that one agreement would be far preferable to two. His idea (which he had already mentioned to the Secretary of State) was that while keeping to one agreement, this country and Italy should sign a special arrangement (there were several treaties under Locarno, he reminded me) in which they would relieve each other from the practical application as between themselves of the assistance provided for. The Italian Ambassador laid great stress on the high political necessity of not disturbing 'the Locarno structure', or the close texture of Anglo-Italian relations. He said, again speaking privately, that he himself felt this was a most important point. This view of course corresponds with that already expressed in Foreign Office telegram to Paris No. 27 of today.<sup>1</sup> Signor Grandi in fact more than confirmed the idea therein expressed that Italy would not wish to be relegated to a second (or, in her eyes, secondary) agreement. I think it would not be misinterpreting his attitude to say that such a suggestion would be both abortive and harmful.

I informed Signor Grandi of the last paragraph of Foreign Office telegram to you No. 78,<sup>2</sup> saying that the Italian Government had been asked for the earliest expression of any suggestions or comments that they might wish to make, and that the way was therefore of course wide open for any observations on the part of his Government. The Ambassador said that he would telegraph today to Signor Mussolini making the suggestion which he had

<sup>1</sup> No. 415.

<sup>2</sup> No. 413.

already described to me, and he added that it would be very helpful if I would let you know whether I thought the suggestion a good one. I said that I would of course be prepared to express such a personal opinion to you. The Ambassador added that the idea had already been well received by the Secretary of State. He had however no official instructions, and repeated again that so far he was only expressing his strong personal opinions.

It would be well if in accordance with the last paragraph of our telegram No. 78<sup>2</sup> you sought an interview with Signor Mussolini as soon as possible after Signor Grandi's telegram may be presumed to have reached him.

### No. 417

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 6, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 79 Telegraphic [C 974/55/18]*

ROME, February 5, 1935, 9.40 p.m.

My telegram No. 78.<sup>1</sup>

Communiqué resulting from London conversations is welcomed by the entire press as indicating a great stride forward towards European pacification and reconstruction. It is pointed out with satisfaction that on the main questions there is now complete agreement between Italy, France and England and it is hoped that Germany will agree to collaborate on a basis of equality. Conclusions arrived at in London are regarded as eminently practical. England had seen that changing circumstances made it impossible to maintain the policy of isolation and France had realised that it was useless to defend legal fictions or to follow the course she had adopted up to now as regards security and armaments. Rome agreements had paved the way for London conversations which were closely linked up with them.

Most comments recall the four Power Pact<sup>2</sup> and Signor Mussolini's armaments memorandum of last year.<sup>3</sup>

Proposed Air Convention is received with some hesitation as far as its application to Italy is concerned and further examination is thought necessary. It is pointed out that it goes outside the bounds of Locarno inasmuch as England and Italy would be guaranteed as well as being guarantors. This was obviously of great advantage to England and showed that she had realised that her isolation was ended.

Detailed comments follow by Saving telegram.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of February 4, not printed, gave a preliminary survey of Italian press reactions to the London communiqué of that day.

<sup>2</sup> Initialled in Rome on June 7, 1933; cf. Volume V, No. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Of January 31, 1934; cf. No. 322, note 3.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed.

*Letter from Sir H. Montgomery (The Hague) to Sir R. Vansittart*  
[C 1090/55/18]

THE HAGUE, February 5, 1935

My dear Van,

I thought it better not to make too dead a set at de Graeff,<sup>1</sup> the Foreign Minister, by going to see him on some thin and minor pretext in order to find out what the reactions of this Government were to the results of the Anglo-French conversations in London. I, therefore, waited until this evening when I met him at dinner at the Argentine Legation.

Having got de Graeff on to the subject I found him rather forthcoming. He said that the result of the conversations had created a very favourable impression on his Government, that it was much more than he had hoped would come of the meetings in London and that it made the prospects of an improvement—important to the Dutch in common with others—in the position in Europe generally much more hopeful. He said that he thought the air Locarno suggestion was of particular importance, but, while he quite understood why the views of only the Locarno powers with regard to it had been asked for in the first instance, he was interested to know what the intention was as regards other countries particularly, of course, from his point of view, Holland, which indeed stood to be in the middle of things in the case of any such arrangement coming into actual operation. Was it intended, as he rather understood from part of Sir John Simon's broadcast speech,<sup>2</sup> that, if the proposal met with a favourable reception from the Locarno powers the adherence to it of others should not be precluded? (I have looked since I came home at the speech as reported in the *Times* and I cannot find anything in it which seems to lend itself to that interpretation).

De Graeff said that next week he is to be asked questions in the First Chamber as to the views of the Dutch Government on the result of the conversations generally and that he would, in any case, probably answer in vague and general terms expressing the satisfaction of his Government at the results achieved; but it was naturally of interest to him to know what, if anything, was in the minds of the framers of the air proposal, as regards countries other than the Locarno powers who might be affected by sudden aggressive air action against or over their country. What for instance was envisaged if such an attack took place, via the air over Holland—which might well be the case and which would, he said without hesitation, be a violation of Dutch neutrality.

The burden of his remarks might be summarized as: 'Where does Holland come in?'

I was naturally rather taken aback by de Graeff's enquiry for it is the nearest approach to getting off the strict neutrality-in-all-things fence and to

<sup>1</sup> Jonkheer Dr. A. C. D. de Graeff was Minister for Foreign Affairs in Dr. H. Colijn's ministry.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Times*, February 4, p. 14.

mixing up in the 'big-power situation' that I have come across in these parts. I was of course quite non-committal, more particularly as (though I had in my own mind rather wondered 'where Holland came in') it had not previously occurred to me—as indeed it still does not, that there was any suggestion in the Secretary of State's speech of an extension of the proposed agreement beyond the Locarno powers. I expressed pleasure at hearing of the favourable impression created on the Dutch Government by the result of the London meeting. I touched only lightly on the point that people at home were, I believed, conscious of the reluctance of this country to become involved in possible complications between other powers, and that this would in itself account for no reference having been made at this stage, at any rate, to Holland. I did not say anything as to the possibility of making an enquiry from you as to the point which was exercising his mind. I thought it safer not to ask him at this stage what the attitude of the Dutch Govt. would be if they were sounded as to taking a hand.

But you may think that some response might usefully be made. Has the question of the inclusion of this and other countries (but particularly this), in any Air Locarno that may be arrived at, been under consideration at all? And is there anything that can usefully be said on the subject to the Dutch Government, confidentially or for use in the Chamber—or, if there is not, can you tell me anything for my own information?

I have thought it better to put this into a private letter rather than a despatch as the conversation was entirely unofficial and the subject is rather a ticklish one; but you will, of course, make whatever use of it you think best.

Yours ever,

HUBERT MONTGOMERY

#### No. 419

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 6, 8.30 a.m.)  
No. 84 Telegraphic [C 977/55/18]*

ROME, February 6, 1935, 1.30 a.m.

Your telegram No. 78.<sup>1</sup>

I explained to Signor Suvich your general views as regards proposed air arrangements and asked him if he could tell me whether Italian Government preferred one or two conventions. Signor Suvich replied that he considered one general instrument was preferable. He suggested, however, that this single convention should be concluded between all the Locarno Powers with a proviso that owing to geographical considerations no guarantee was given by Great Britain to Italy nor by Italy to Great Britain. He thought that such solution was desirable for two reasons: first that it definitely brought in all the Locarno Powers and secondly because French now seemed desirous of extending convention suggested as between France, Italy and Germany to

<sup>1</sup> No. 413.

the Little Entente and possibly other Powers. He was opposed to any such generalization and wished guaranteed and guarantors to be limited to circle of Locarno Treaty. He intended to ask Signor Mussolini for his approval of this proposal tomorrow and if, as he expected, he obtained this a telegram would at once be sent to Signor Grandi on the subject. Signor Suvich also asked me to express to you great appreciation of Italian Government of references made in communiqué to Rome agreements.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin and Brussels.

#### No. 420

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 6, 12.35 p.m.)*  
*No. 85 Telegraphic [C 1002/55/18]*

ROME, February 6, 1935, 12.10 p.m.

I hope Italian plan may receive favourable consideration.<sup>1</sup> Apart from what Signor Suvich said, I feel that its great attraction here would lie in fact that British and Italian signatures would appear on the same document in exactly similar conditions.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 419.

#### No. 421

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 6, 12.35 p.m.)*  
*No. 42 Telegraphic [C 1004/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 6, 1935, 12.26 p.m.

I dined last night with Minister for Foreign Affairs. He assured me that Anglo-French proposals were being taken into earnest and careful consideration. He promised a reply as soon as possible, probably within a week. Meanwhile I gather that as regards Eastern pact German Government will again formulate their objections thereto, perhaps this time with greater precision. It of course stinks in their nostrils all the more owing to Litvinov's keenness for it.

On the other hand the air convention continues to (? grow)<sup>1</sup> on the Germans. Baron von Neurath confirmed their first favourable impressions. Indeed he seems anxious that we should proceed to conclusion of that instrument in the near future on broad lines and without any unnecessary detail. The long and tedious negotiations regarding an armaments convention could then follow without any undue hurry.

Regarding possibility or manner of Italian participation in this or another separate air convention, His Excellency feels that Italy must take the lead in formulating proposals.

<sup>1</sup> The text is here uncertain.

Baron von Neurath seemed pleased at bad reception suggested air convention had met with in Russia.<sup>2</sup>

Repeated to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 427 below, note 1.

#### No. 422

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 6, 1.30 p.m.)*

*No. 43 Telegraphic [C 1005/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 6, 1935, 1.35 p.m.

My telegram No. 42<sup>1</sup> and Rome telegram No. 16.<sup>2</sup>

Baron von Neurath also expressed hope that Air Convention would be confined to Locarno Powers and would not be extended to Little Entente etc.

Repeated to Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 421.

<sup>2</sup> It was suggested on the filed copy that the reference was to Rome telegram No. 84 to the Foreign Office i.e. No. 419.

#### No. 423

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 7)*

*No. 23 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1007/55/18]*

PARIS, February 6, 1935

Your telegram No. 27.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary General of Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to whom prescribed communication was made, said that no answer had yet been received from Rome to the telegram sent by Monsieur Laval after seeing Signor Grandi in London; he therefore had no information of his own.

2. Speaking for himself (Monsieur Laval returned from London with influenza and will be laid up for a few days) Monsieur Léger said he saw no difficulty about a single instrument on the Locarno model to be concluded between the Locarno Powers provided that Italy were satisfied as under Locarno to give her assistance without receiving any. If she wished for her counterpart she could only obtain it by means of a second instrument inasmuch as the primary instrument which was intended to be an amplification of Locarno would have the same regional limitation. If Italy insisted on her counterpart Monsieur Léger thought the French Government would be ready to conclude a second instrument between France, Germany and Italy. When the question was put to him he said, still speaking personally, that he did not think the French Government would press for the introduction of the Little Entente into any such secondary instrument if Italy desired one.

Repeated to Rome in cypher.

<sup>1</sup> No. 415.

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 8, 2.40 p.m.)*

*No. 4 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1077/55/18]*

VIENNA, February 6, 1935

Minister for Foreign Office<sup>1</sup> expressed to me this morning his satisfaction at result of meeting with French Ministers in London. His feeling was that his government had succeeded in securing a 'last fair' offer to Germany which would compel the latter to show her hand. He added, however, that he was not over optimistic as regards German response since so far as Austria was concerned his latest information was that Germany did not intend to desist in her purpose though for time being she would concentrate her pressure on Memel, leaving Austria till afterwards.

Minister for Foreign Affairs said that when he saw Monsieur Benes the other day he had impressed upon him the urgency of doing everything possible to assist Austrian Government since if Austrian bridgehead collapsed under German Nazi pressure, Austrians in their own defence would be driven into the position of becoming almost extreme supporters of Nazi aspirations which included supporting aims of Sudetendeutsche in Czechoslovakia. Minister for Foreign Affairs said M. Benes entirely appreciated point and promised that he would exert his energies to help Austrian Government.

It was clear to me that attitude of Minister for Foreign Affairs was one of not over-optimistic expectation as regards a 'reasonable' reply from Germany although he affirmed his belief that Baron Neurath would exercise moderating influence. In the meantime there are indications that Austrian Government are not showing themselves insensible to possible developments. It was stated to me last night by a reliable authority that they had restored to their employment certain individuals implicated with Doctor Rintelen<sup>2</sup> in the July putsch.

*Confidential*

United States Minister this morning showed me in strict confidence copy of a letter which he had received from a member of his late staff in Berlin<sup>3</sup> as well as record of conversation between United States Ambassador at Rome<sup>4</sup> and Signor Suvich. Neither document was of encouraging nature as regards disposition of Germany. Berlin informant stated that he had learnt from reliable source in close touch with Herr Hitler that the latter would have nothing to do with proposals for fresh pacts. Germany now felt strong enough to show her teeth and would shortly take a decision informing Powers

<sup>1</sup> This should presumably have read: 'Minister for Foreign Affairs', namely, Baron von Berger-Waldenberg.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 49, note 5.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. George Messersmith had been United States Consul-General at Berlin prior to presenting his credentials at Vienna on May 23, 1934.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Breckinridge Long.

that she no longer regarded Part 5 of Treaty of Versailles as in operation and of her intentions as regards armaments.

Signor Suvich seems to have told United States Ambassador that he considered French had made a mistake in agreeing to Saar plebiscite as result of plebiscite had only been to render Germany more intractable. Signor Suvich thought Germany would now resume her pressure on Memel, Austria and Polish Corridor in addition to agitation in the Upper Adige. Germany would now pursue her objective of Bagdad, and in other words conditions to-day were very much what they had been in 1914.

**No. 425**

*Record by Mr. Sargent of a conversation with M. Masaryk<sup>1</sup>*

*[C 1132/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 6, 1935*

The Czechoslovak Minister tells me that he has just been speaking on the telephone with Dr. Benesh about the fears which the Anglo-French communiqué aroused, especially in Moscow, and, to a lesser extent, in the Little Entente countries. Dr. Benesh has been in communication with M. Laval on the subject, with a view to damping down the agitation which threatens to spring up in this connexion. He has in particular urged patience and calm on the Soviet Minister at Prague.<sup>2</sup> The latter has passed on this advice to M. Litvinov.

<sup>1</sup> M. Jan Masaryk was Czechoslovak Minister at London.

<sup>2</sup> M. Serge Alexandrowsky.

**No. 426**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 8, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 88 Telegraphic [C 1050/55/18]*

ROME, *February 7, 1935, 9.30 a.m.*

My telegrams Nos. 84<sup>1</sup> and 86.<sup>2</sup>

I understand that instructions have now been sent to Signor Grandi in the sense indicated.

I fear I fail to follow arguments put forward by Monsieur Léger reproduced in Paris telegram No. 23 (Saving)<sup>3</sup> regarding necessity for two instru-

<sup>1</sup> No. 419.

<sup>2</sup> In this telegram of February 6 (received 3 p.m.), not printed, Sir E. Drummond said that in view of the fact that the point raised by the Italian Ambassador was now before Signor Mussolini he was 'refraining for the time being from asking for appointment with head of government as such interview would in the present circumstances seem only to be redundant'.

<sup>3</sup> No. 423.



ments if Italy is to receive the same counterpart as United Kingdom. Might not simplest scheme be a general convention of mutual aerial assistance between the five Powers with a contracting out protocol as between the United Kingdom and Italy?

Repeated to Paris.

**No. 427**

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 7, 12.45 p.m.)*

*No. 11 Telegraphic [C 1040/55/18]*

MOSCOW, February 7, 1935, 2.2 p.m.

My telegram No. 10.<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday I went to lunch and walked with Monsieur Litvinov in the country. I was surprised to find him by no means displeased with Anglo-French declaration. In fact he remarked that it seemed to him satisfactory as it now stood, if no more concessions were made to Germany.

It was soon clear what had produced this change from first impressions received here: for the French Ambassador, so Monsieur Litvinov told me, had called upon him the day before under instructions from his government to explain full meaning of London understanding: and Monsieur Litvinov appeared to be fully satisfied that Germany would have to subscribe to Eastern Pact (including 'mutual assistance') concomitantly and 'parallel with' the other stipulations of proposed agreement. I asked French Ambassador who was also of the party whether this were so and he confirmed it.

I have not yet seen text of London communiqué, which does not seem to have been quite correctly reported in the press here.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram of February 4, not printed, Lord Chilston had reported that the first 'reactions here to Anglo-French understanding as reported in today's press are not favourable'. He had the impression 'that Soviet Government have come to the conclusion quite recently that if any understanding should be reached between the western Powers, France may be lost to Russia . . . '.

<sup>2</sup> The full text was sent to Moscow in Foreign Office telegram No. 5 of February 8, despatched at 11.30 a.m.

**No. 428**

*Memorandum by Mr. Sargent on Russia's probable attitude towards a 'General Settlement' with Germany, and the Proposed Air Agreement*

*[C 1471/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 7, 1935

1. Russia is really afraid that Germany, in combination with Poland, is planning to expand in the East.

2. She therefore wants to have her western frontiers defended against Germany and Poland, more especially in the event of a Russo-Japanese war.

3. The obvious Power to do this is France, but France can only be induced to assume this new commitment if she can get something in return.

4. So long as France is frightened about her own security, she thinks a Russian guarantee would be of value to her, and will be prepared to pay for it by guaranteeing Russia's western frontier.

5. It is therefore to Russia's interest that France should not achieve by other means the security which she is looking for because if she does she will no longer require Russia's help, or at least will not be so ready to pay the price for it.

6. The proposed 'General Settlement' with Germany, and the proposed Air Agreement for Western Europe are both intended to afford France the security which she is looking for.

7. They are both therefore objectionable to Russia and we must expect her to do her utmost to prevent either of them from materialising.

8. One of the weapons Russia will use for this purpose is the argument that if France does not come to the defence of Russia's western frontier, Russia will come to terms with Germany, and face Europe with an aggressive German-Russian Alliance.

9. I submit that this is bluff and ought to be challenged whenever possible.

10. If Russia really thought it so easy to bring about a Russo-German Entente she would not be so frightened about her western frontiers as she is.

11. If Germany and Poland had no plans for future penetration towards the East they would not be so opposed to the Eastern Pact in its July form as they are.

12. Nazism has two fundamental principles. The fight against the Jews and the fight against Communism. However much Hitler may compromise on other subjects he cannot compromise on these without destroying the *raison d'être* of his system. For this reason a return of Germany to the policy of cooperation with Russia however much desired by the Reichswehr and the industrialists is possible only at the cost of overthrowing the Nazi régime and Hitler personally.

13. Even so the need of expansion will force Germany towards the East as being the only field open to her, and as long as the Bolshevik régime exists in Russia it is impossible for this expansion to take merely the form of peaceful penetration.

O. G. SARGENT

No. 429

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 173 [C 1074/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 7, 1935

Sir,

Signor Grandi called to-day to communicate the views of the Italian Government about the air pact suggested in the Anglo-French communiqué

of four days ago. He read to me the substance of a telegram which he had received from Signor Mussolini. Italy is disposed to approve the broad lines of such a plan for aerial assistance between the Locarno Powers in the general form proposed. But Signor Mussolini wants there to be a single agreement embracing all the five Locarno Powers, and not two regional agreements, one of which would include ourselves but not Italy, and the other of which would include Italy but not ourselves. In order, however, to exclude the case of the United Kingdom being required to render assistance to Italy, or *vice versa*, Signor Mussolini was in agreement with the suggestion of a contemporary protocol, or some such instrument, entered into between Italy and this country, under which we mutually agreed not to look to one another for aerial assistance, under the agreement. Signor Grandi and I had already discussed<sup>1</sup> this method of achieving the main result in a single instrument, while ruling out its application to assistance rendered by this country and Italy *inter se*, and the Ambassador expressed his pleasure in finding that Signor Mussolini was ready to adopt these ideas.

2. I told the Ambassador of our satisfaction at finding that, once again, Signor Mussolini and ourselves were thinking along the same lines and were ready to agree on a common treatment of the problem. We had already warned the French of the view we thought Italy would take.<sup>2</sup> We should greatly regret the necessity of working out an air agreement in a form which did not put this country and Italy in the same document. Signor Grandi observed that it would be the first time since the war in which Italy and the United Kingdom would be making corresponding agreements in separate documents, and he most earnestly trusted that we could keep the arrangement within the boundary of Locarno, neither more nor less. I asked whether he thought that M. Laval, in applying the scheme to cover Italy, was thinking also of including other States in that region not covered by Locarno. Signor Grandi replied that he hoped not. The message which he was giving to me was also being communicated to the French Government by the Italian Ambassador in Paris. Signor Mussolini's view was that if there was any question of including other countries, such as the Little Entente, that ought to come by separate negotiations later on.

3. I pointed out to the Ambassador, and he agreed, that the simple formula of a protocol under which Italy and the United Kingdom undertook not to look to one another for assistance under the main agreement would not cover all the cases which must be excluded. For example, in the improbable assumption, which must nevertheless be made in order to test the plan juridically, of Italy making an unprovoked aggression by air upon France or Germany, I presumed that Signor Mussolini did not desire that we should be bound to assist the State attacked. Yet, if there was a single reciprocal agreement between the five Locarno Powers, this case would be covered, and it would not be excluded by a protocol in the terms hitherto suggested. Similarly, we must consider the equally improbable case of an unprovoked air attack by this country upon France or Germany. We did not desire,

<sup>1</sup> See No. 416.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 415.

while excusing Italy from assisting us if we were attacked, to find Italy under an obligation in this imaginary case, of coming in against us. It would therefore be necessary, if a single agreement between the five Locarno Powers was the main document, to provide for the cases to be excluded along somewhat different lines. For example, we might say that nothing in the document would require either the United Kingdom or Italy to take action under it in a class of case not covered by its existing obligations under the Locarno agreements.<sup>3</sup>

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>3</sup> The substance of this despatch was sent to Rome in telegram No. 88 of 6.30 p.m. on February 8, repeated the same day telegraphically to Berlin (No. 24), Moscow (No. 6), Paris (No. 40 Saving), Brussels (No. 8).

No. 430

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 15)*  
*No. 140 [C 1279/55/18]*

ROME, February 7, 1935

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that those of my colleagues whom I have met recently have all expressed high appreciation of the results of the Anglo-French conversations in London and their belief that a great step has been taken towards a solution of those political difficulties which have troubled Europe for so long. I have been frequently asked for enlightenment on certain points set out in the *communiqué*, chiefly as to the application of the proposed air convention and the exact position of His Majesty's Government with regard to the Central European arrangements reached at Rome.

2. My Japanese colleague,<sup>1</sup> whom I saw this morning, put, however, two original queries. He enquired whether the arms convention mentioned in the *communiqué* was to be of general or only European scope. In this connexion he pointed out that Russia was both an Asiatic and a European Power, and that not only his own country, but others such as Turkey and Persia, could not but be interested in the armaments of Russia.

3. He then reminded me that the abrogation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles could only be effected by the consent of all the parties to that Treaty. He hastily added that of course Japan would not refuse her consent, but it was clear that he was somewhat fearful that Japan, although one of the principal allied and associated Powers, might be forgotten. I remarked that I felt sure that this last point would be duly borne in mind. As to the other, it seemed to me doubtful whether a stage had yet been reached which would make its consideration necessary.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC DRUMMOND

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Y. Sugimura.

*Letter from Sir R. Vansittart to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*Private and Personal*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 7, 1935

My dear Eric,

Many thanks for your letter about Lothian.<sup>1</sup> The following is for your private guidance and is not in any way intended to worry you.

After Lothian's foolish second article in the 'Times'<sup>2</sup> I hear that there was some criticism among Cabinet Ministers that you had entertained him.<sup>3</sup> I think the idea was probably that you might be seeming to lend substance to the illusion that he had a mission. Anyhow, Simon did not think you could have done otherwise. Nor do I. As, however, you above all others may be likely to be threatened with the visits of many more busybodies in coming times, it is perhaps a point for you to turn over in your mind, and that is why I am writing to you. You will certainly be a better judge of what to do than I, but in your place I should be a little inclined to think that the safest course might be to avoid giving entertainments to people who are likely to be misrepresented, or to misrepresent themselves, as having missions (though I don't think you could in any case avoid receiving them), and to do just what you like about the others. The question is rather a difficult one, but I certainly don't see what else you could have done in the case of Lothian, who is, after all, an ex-minister.<sup>4</sup>

As I said above, however, I am only trying to think aloud to you and to be of some assistance in case of future difficulties; it is not a point which should occasion you any sleeplessness. If there should ever be a case on which you would like to consult me, please do.

Yours ever,  
VAN

<sup>1</sup> Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 402, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 391.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Lothian had been Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1931.

*Mr. Dormer (Oslo) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 8, 1.30 p.m.)*

*No. 10 Telegraphic [C 1075/55/18]*

OSLO, February 8, 1935, 1.10 p.m.

Prime Minister<sup>1</sup> told me last night at dinner that he had been informed that His Majesty's Government had suggested to Swedish Government that Scandinavian and other neutral Governments should support the proposals being made to German Government as a result of recent Anglo-French

<sup>1</sup> M. Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, Norwegian Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs since March 1933.

conversations in London.<sup>2</sup> Swedish Government had asked his opinion. He asked me whether I was going to make a similar suggestion to Norwegian Government. I replied that I had no instructions. He said that much as he hoped that Germany would fall into line he was afraid that if neutral powers made the proposed *démarche* the German Government would not believe that it was spontaneous and would regard it as a form of pressure prompted by Great Britain and France with the result that it might do more harm than good.

His Excellency also told me that before visit of French Ministers to London the Swedish Government had suggested to neutral Governments that they should recommend in London and Paris that any proposals made to Germany should be of such a nature as to make it easy for her to return to the League. The Netherlands Government had welcomed the idea but the Swiss Government had not, on the grounds that it was unwise to display too much anxiety for Germany's return to the League. His own attitude had been one of reserve as he thought that before any such step was taken they should take soundings as to whether it would be acceptable.

He thought that Swedish Government had dropped their proposal but that it was possible that Swedish Minister in London had mentioned it to His Majesty's Government, and that this new *démarche* at Stockholm was the result.

<sup>2</sup> In a minute of February 9 commenting on this statement Sir R. Vansittart wrote: 'Baron Palmstierna [Swedish Minister at London] . . . thrusts his services upon us, and then pretends the initiative came from us. Such a twist destroys the whole utility of the suggested action, and renders it not useful but positively detrimental.'

### No. 433

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 8, 2.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 44 Telegraphic [C 1076/55/18]*

BERLIN, *February 8, 1935, 1.55 p.m.*

Herr von Buelow before going on four weeks leave, told Italian Ambassador last night that he had drafted German reply to Anglo-French communiqué and it would be now carefully considered by German Government. Herr von Buelow seemed to object to method pursued in both Rome and London whereby bilateral agreement was reached between the two Powers in the first place and Germany was only informed afterwards. Germany should, he maintained, be included in the conversations from the start.

It seems probable that German reply will recapitulate objections to Eastern pact and will point out that German Government still await replies from France and Italy regarding their questions on the Danubian pact. (In this connexion the Italian Ambassador tells me that Italian Government have suggested to French Government what replies should be made).

Usual objections will be made in German reply regarding failure of ex-allies to disarm but no mention will be made of possible return of Germany to the League. Herr von Bülow was very definite on this point. He declared that German Government would not on any account consent to their return to Geneva being made part of general settlement. They might conceivably return *after* their settlement and if certain changes were carried out in methods of procedure etc. at Geneva but their return must be decided by themselves alone and not imposed as a condition. He spoke with usual bitterness of German experiences of the League.

In regard to air convention German reply will probably not be hostile in principle but will contain several searching questions.

Impression of the Italian Ambassador is that Germans will not be in any great hurry to send in their reply in the hope that time will show certain acute differences amongst the other Powers.

Repeated to Paris and Rome.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Sir R. Vansittart of February 9 Sir E. Drummond remarked that when he was Secretary-General of the League of Nations (1919-33) he saw Herr von Bülow in Berlin from time to time, and Bülow never mentioned that the Germans felt themselves to be suffering under unequal treatment, 'I expect because he knew that I should have asked him for definite instances and he could not have produced one. The truth is that Germany, when she came into the League and during the time she was in it, was treated exceptionally well. . . .'

#### No. 434

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 8, 9.35 p.m.)*  
*No. 6 Telegraphic [C 1093/55/18]*

WARSAW, February 8, 1935, 9 p.m.

My telegram No. 2 Saving of February 7th.<sup>1</sup>

French Ambassador who had received instructions to communicate London agreement to the Polish Government and to impress upon them the importance of favourably considering Eastern Pact in connexion therewith informs me that Minister for Foreign Affairs, after emphasizing the fact that France has at last given way on the subject of German rearmament, requested him to congratulate Monsieur Laval on the success of these negotiations. He said nothing about the Eastern Pact but the French Ambassador thinks Monsieur Beck is deeply impressed at the success of London negotiations which he had not expected any more than that of Rome negotiations.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram, not printed, was not received in the Foreign Office until February 11. It reported that the 'general tone of Polish press comment on Anglo-French agreement' was 'distinctly favourable' but that the 'oblique allusion in the agreement to Eastern Pact' was criticized—'why is it stipulated in advance that instrument regulating affairs in Eastern Europe should contain provision for mutual assistance and why in any case should Eastern be differentiated from Central Europe in this respect'.

French Ambassador has suggested to his Government that it would be desirable that His Majesty's Government should impress on the Polish Government the necessity of favourably considering the Eastern Pact in the event of Germany now proving amenable. I pointed out to him that while Minister for Foreign Affairs may not have said so Polish public opinion appeared to be irritated by distinction which has been made between Central European Powers and Eastern Powers as regards consultation and mutual assistance. The French Ambassador admitted that this was a point which it was difficult to counter.

He hears that there may be possibility of either Monsieur Beck or some representative of the Polish Government visiting Herr Hitler. When he questioned Minister for Foreign Affairs on this point he was evasive.

I am still under the impression that Poland will resist any pressure either from the French or the British Government regarding Eastern Pact in its present form and I am doubtful of the wisdom of our taking any further action in this matter at present time.<sup>2</sup>

Repeated by post to Berlin and Paris.

<sup>2</sup> In a minute on this telegram Mr. Wigram remarked on February 11: 'We certainly should not make any further repres[entatio]ns to the Poles about the Eastern Pact until we are asked to do so by the French: and even then, it will be for consideration whether, in view of Sir H. Kennard's opinion, we should do so. Much the best course seems to be to explore the possibility of persuading the French to put up some alternative to the Eastern pact. That possibility is being dealt with on other paper [cf. No. 468 below].' This minute was initialled by Sir R. Vansittart without comment on February 12.

## No. 435

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 25 Telegraphic [C 1114/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 9, 1935, 3.15 p.m.*

Following from Sir R. Vansittart.

It appears from press that passage in Prime Minister's speech at Luton on February 7th regarding return of Germany to League<sup>1</sup> may be liable to give rise to mis-apprehension in Germany. You should, therefore, know that Prime Minister had of course no intention of suggesting that Germany's return to the League should take place before negotiations on any of questions covered by Anglo-French communiqué, or of derogating in any way from principle of simultaneity therein embodied.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Times*, February 9, p. 12.



No. 436

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 11, 10.50 a.m.)*  
*No. 45 Telegraphic [C 1112/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 11, 1935, 10.52 a.m.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs told French Ambassador the day before yesterday that the German reply<sup>1</sup> would probably be given on or about February 14th.

French Ambassador thinks Germans wish to continue discussions, anyhow in the first instance, by means of ordinary diplomatic conversations at Berlin; he doubts however whether his Government will agree to this method of procedure.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the reply to the Anglo-French communiqué; cf. No. 433.

No. 437

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*  
*No. 26 Telegraphic [C 1159/55/18]*

*Private and Confidential* FOREIGN OFFICE, February 11, 1935, 10.30 p.m.

In connection with the proposals contained in the joint communiqué and their possible outcome, suggestions have appeared in the last few days (for example in a 'Times' despatch from Berlin)<sup>1</sup> alluding to the possibility of a visit by me to Berlin at an early date. I do not at all exclude such a project and should be glad to have your views upon the question, and in case you should also approve the idea, your views upon the most opportune time. My own ideas on the subject are not settled, but what I have had provisionally in my mind has been something of this nature. I understand from you<sup>2</sup> that we are likely to receive the German reply on February 14th or thereabouts. Judging by the forecast contained in your telegram No. 44,<sup>3</sup> it may not be of a very satisfactory nature. But it may ask for various explanations or at least be not so unfavourable as to exclude further negotiation. If so, that might be the most opportune moment for me to come out and endeavour to remove such obstacles as had appeared in the German reply. This of course would entail the German reply *not* being of an entirely negative nature and being at least no worse and if possible better than Herr von Bülow's draft. I should like your observations on this suggestion at the earliest possible date.

2. The foregoing is for your own information and guidance at present, but I must leave it to your discretion whether you think it well to make any use or not of it confidentially with the German Government. I am inclined to think

<sup>1</sup> See *The Times*, February 9, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 436.

<sup>3</sup> No. 433.

that by reason of the risk of premature publicity it would be well not to **make** use of this plan at the present stage unless you have reason to **anticipate an** entirely negative German reply and this I do not understand to be your present impression.

**No. 438**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Ovey (Brussels)*

*No. 9 Telegraphic [C 1118/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 11, 1935, 10.30 p.m.*

Belgian Ambassador has to-day communicated official note recording his Government's satisfaction at 'understanding recently reached between Britain and France, and France and Italy with a view to the reinforcement of peace' and its 'recognition of Belgium's interest in participating in negotiations which would assure in western Europe immediate military assistance in the event of aerial aggression'.<sup>1</sup> Belgian Ambassador added that he was instructed to ask 'in what form and at what time British Government means to associate Belgium in the negotiations concerning the aerial convention and with regard to the scheme outlined by it for the replacement of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles.'<sup>2</sup>

Repeated to Paris, Berlin, Rome and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 414.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 10 of February 12 authorized Sir E. Ovey to express His Majesty's Government's satisfaction 'at the Belgian Government's decision'.

**No. 439**

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Dormer (Oslo)*

*No. 3 Telegraphic [C 1075/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 11, 1935, 10.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 10.<sup>1</sup>

Prime Minister's statement to you does not correctly describe the situation. The Swedish Minister here approached us on two occasions (before and after the Anglo-French conversations had taken place) to ask whether there was any help that the Swedish Government could give, for instance, in Berlin.<sup>2</sup> The Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs desired to be helpful in any way that he could and would be willing to approach the other 'neutral' Powers if the moment seemed opportune.

Our response to these overtures should have made it clear to the Swedish Minister that His Majesty's Government, while appreciating the spirit in which the Swedish offer was made, must leave it to the Swedish Government

<sup>1</sup> No. 432.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, note 2.

alone to decide whether they felt that they could drop some hint in Berlin such as that recent events in London seemed a step forward in regard to which the German Government might assume a constructive attitude, and whether they should do this alone or secure the cooperation of other Powers for the purpose.

We understand from the Netherlands Minister here that his Government are not in favour of a joint 'neutral' démarche at Berlin which has, it seems, twice been proposed to them by the Swedish Government in the last few weeks, i.e. both before and after the most recent Swedish approaches to us.

The above is for your information and guidance should the Norwegian Prime Minister return to the subject.

Repeated to Stockholm for information only.

No. 440

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir R. Vansittart*

BERLIN, February 11, 1935

My dear Van,

Many thanks for your letter of February 7th.<sup>1</sup>

My telegram No. 30 Saving<sup>2</sup> of January 30th may have conveyed the erroneous impression that our dinner on the previous night had been got up for Lothian. This of course was not the case. We had invited the Neuraths and others about five weeks beforehand (as the custom is here), and when I heard from Lothian a few days before his arrival that he was coming over in connection with a Rhodes scholars' dinner at Berlin on January 27th, I naturally asked him whether he would not come to our's. To have left him out would have seemed rude and churlish, particularly as I knew him from Peace Conference days.<sup>3</sup> Needless to say all his interviews with Hitler and Co. were arranged by himself without any Embassy intervention.

Lord Allen we merely asked to lunch alone with ourselves and Breen.<sup>4</sup> In the course of the meal and afterwards we tried to put him wise on a variety of points. We were not quite unsuccessful, and in any case cannot have done harm by our efforts.

It is probably I who suffer most from the numerous British peace missions to Germany, but I feel less harm is done if the Embassy can keep in some sort of touch with them and thus find out what their activities amount to. Moreover, I do not want the Germans to think that I am annoyed by the peace missionaries or wish to work against their noble endeavours to supplement the feeble efforts of an effete and incompetent ambassador. Many of these missionaries, as you know, come out with the blessing, if not at the direct

<sup>1</sup> No. 431.

<sup>2</sup> No. 391.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. P. H. Kerr (11th Marquess of Lothian since 1930) had been Secretary to Mr. Lloyd George from 1918 to 1921.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Timothy Florence Breen was Press Officer at H.M. Embassy, Berlin.

instigation, of the German Embassy in London. It therefore seems particularly desirable to avoid giving the Germans reason to suppose, by adopting a sulky attitude, that the Embassy disapproves of any efforts, however unauthorised on our side, to promote Anglo-German agreement and understanding. Also a friendly meal with us may help to prevent the complete 'nobbling' of the missionary by the ineffable Ribbentrop, who is convinced, and probably seeks to convince all his England friends, that the Foreign Office, and perhaps also the Embassy, are rabidly Germanophobe.

I hope you will, as in the past, let me have due warning of the impending arrival in Berlin of British Ministers and Members of Parliament or others. For my part I shall continue to take it for granted, unless I hear from you to the contrary, that the persons in question do not come here to represent the view of His Majesty's Government as a whole or any member of it.<sup>5</sup>

Yours ever,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Sir R. Vansittart, in the course of a brief reply to this letter on February 15, wrote: 'I agree personally with what you say about the wisdom of keeping in touch with such visitors and avoiding their being nobbled. I thought it better, however, to let you know privately that there *had* been another son de cloche, though I have not taken it very seriously.'

<sup>6</sup> Signature missing on filed copy.

#### No. 441

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 12, 2.50 p.m.)*

*No. 48 Telegraphic [C 1160/55/18]*

*Private and Confidential*

BERLIN, February 12, 1935, 2.22 p.m.

Your telegram No. 26.<sup>1</sup>

So many conflicting forces are at work here that Chancellor's final decision is still a matter for speculation.

From German internal point of view your visit would be flattering and helpful to German Government and it would be specially welcome to a considerable body of opinion which desires a direct understanding with England. From point of view of ultimate Anglo-German relations I do not think visit would do good unless there were reasonable prospect of it leading to early general agreement. Pending receipt of German reply it is difficult to say whether such prospect exists but the outlook is not too encouraging.

A responsible and Anglophil official in German Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently expressed view to a member of my staff that you would be well advised not to come to Berlin now.

I presume you will also wish to consider effect of your visit on the French. So far as I can gather from remarks volunteered by members of French Embassy on press rumours of your impending visit the French would regard this moment as inopportune.

<sup>1</sup> No. 437.

Situation may change at any time. Meanwhile I should deprecate giving the Germans any hint that you contemplate a visit. In their present mood German Government are more likely to exploit your visit in their own interest than in that of a general understanding.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In a private letter to Sir E. Phipps of even date, Sir R. Vansittart wrote: 'I must really congratulate you on your telegram No. 48. I think it shows both brilliance and intuition. It was exactly the answer that I felt should come and it is what I hoped for. I expected something helpful from you, but hardly expected anything quite so helpful. I say this feelingly, because I had also felt that any possibility of a visit to Berlin must be handled with the utmost care and circumspection, and that until the German reply was received it would be very dangerous even to consider it seriously. I was really anxious lest the fence might in any way be rushed, for the whole field is strewn with difficulties. But you have been instinctively alive to them all, and I am really grateful to you. Your conclusion in particular is, I think, most wise and helpful. It is certainly anyhow helpful to me, for I have been suggesting something of the sort here. It is indeed a good thing to deal with someone of such quick comprehension as yourself. Yours ever, Van. P.S. For your own information, the telegram to which you replied was really a compromise between my view and that of others, and even so I was a little apprehensive of what might turn out to be the sequence of events unless your answer was at least partially in tune with my uneasiness.'

#### No. 442

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 13, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 24 Telegraphic [C 1180/55/18]*

PARIS, February 13, 1935, 12.4 a.m.

My telegram No. 23.<sup>1</sup>

I took opportunity to sound Monsieur Léger discreetly as to attitude of French Government towards negotiation of aerial convention in advance of general settlement. He asserted most categorically that French Ministers interpreted London declaration as implying simultaneous negotiation of all matters referred to therein. Preliminary negotiation of aerial convention would be tantamount to recognizing Germany's re-armament in the air (the arm to which she attached most importance) without obtaining from her the counter-balancing measures of security provided for in declaration. If French Ministers agreed to such a course they would without any shadow of doubt be repudiated by Parliament.

Making it clear that I was speaking without instructions of any kind and was merely voicing my own thoughts, I pointed out to him that this juridical point did not alter the fact that a German air force existed that nothing would make it vanish and that there were sound practical reasons for not making discussion of aerial convention, the most concrete measure of security yet invented, wait upon conclusion of a negotiation which at the best might be very protracted.

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram of February 13, not printed, Sir G. Clerk reported a conversation that evening with M. Léger on another matter.

Monsieur Léger replied that it was a question of reconciling two conflicting considerations. We must endeavour not to lose, or even postpone, the benefits of proposed aerial convention whilst giving Germany no encouragement to evade a general settlement. After some reflection he said that he thought it might conceivably be possible to negotiate the aerial convention forthwith with following provisos:

1. That it would only become operative if and when the general negotiations were successfully concluded.

2. That it became instantly operative if in the meantime any of the parties committed an aerial aggression on another of the parties. Something on those lines if jurists could work it out would secure us advantages of Aerial Convention without ipso facto releasing Germany from aerial clauses of Treaty of Versailles in advance of conclusion of a general limitation convention.

Above suggestion is a strictly personal idea of Monsieur Léger propounded to me in confidence and I would beg that no official allusion be made to it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In a minute of February 13 commenting on M. Léger's proposal Sir R. Vansittart said that he thought that the Germans 'may well try to use the convention for the purpose of wedge-driving'. He also remarked: 'We are going to have to be very careful in this matter, or we shall rouse a hornet's nest. At present the communiqué [cf. No. 400, Annex] is governed by the word simultaneously. The French and the Italians (and the Russians) all so interpret it, and we cannot of course depart from that interpretation save by agreement. We cannot, I think, have a *practical* air convention to include Germany without limitation, and limitation raises all the connected problems.' He doubted whether M. Léger's proposal made sense.

#### No. 443

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 13, 10.10 a.m.)*

*No. 49 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1179/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 13, 1935

I met Minister for Foreign Affairs at dinner last night. He said that he would hand German reply<sup>1</sup> to me and my French colleague tomorrow afternoon (February 14th). It will inter alia express the readiness to enter into immediate negotiations for conclusion of air pact which His Excellency would wish to get signed without waiting for settlement of other questions.

Baron von Neurath would like, after His Majesty's Government have considered this reply, some Englishman not too highly placed but who is well acquainted with the previous history of the pacts and armament negotiations to come to Berlin; but His Excellency said that too much notice should not be paid to his visit by the press.

Perhaps after considering terms of reply you might like to send out Mr. Sargent. French Ambassador for some time past has thought of getting

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 436, note 1.

Monsieur Massigli to come here. Baron von Neurath at first suggested that some quite unofficial person should come out but I said that I did not think this would serve any useful purpose.

#### No. 444

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 15)*

*No. 5 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1222/55/18]*

BRUSSELS, February 13, 1935

London Conversations.

Minister for Foreign Affairs having asked me to call today I gave him the message communicated in your telegram No. 10.<sup>1</sup>

There was one point which His Excellency wished to enquire about which he summarised in the following phrase: 'If the geographical position of the United Kingdom dispenses that country from guaranteeing Italy, Belgium finds herself in an analogous position, all the more so since Belgian aircraft resources are much less than those of the United Kingdom'.

Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that he might possibly have to answer an interpellation on this point, and in any case would be grateful for latest information. I told him position as known to me from your telegram No. 8.<sup>2</sup> I promised him I would enquire whether any formula had been agreed to by His Majesty's Government and the Italian government. Such a formula would, apparently, similarly cover Belgian requirements which seem exactly analogous to ours.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 438, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 429, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 14 of February 18 to Sir E. Ovey said that there had been no further developments as regards the British-Italian formula, but that he would be kept informed.

#### No. 445

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 186 [C 1194/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 13, 1935

Sir,

The Italian Chargé d'Affaires, in the course of a conversation with Sir Robert Vansittart on the 12th February, stated that it was his personal opinion that the German Government would endeavour to negotiate<sup>1</sup> an air agreement only, and, if possible, with Great Britain first. They would then try to get rid of the other essential features of the communiqué issued after the

<sup>1</sup> In the first draft of this despatch the following passage, subsequently deleted, appeared before the word 'negotiate', 'bring about a visit of a British Minister to Berlin in order to'.

recent Anglo-French conversations in London, and would hope by means of the air agreement to force the hands of the other Powers or to drive a wedge between them.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

No. 446

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 14, 6.26 p.m.)*  
*No. 51 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1216/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, February 14, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs read out to me (as he will also do to French Ambassador separately) text of German reply.<sup>2</sup>

I pointed out that in effect this reply was confined to proposals for an Air convention and practically left out of account the Eastern Pact, the Danube Pact, an armaments convention and return of Germany to the League.

Baron von Neurath replied in regard to (1933)<sup>3</sup> the Eastern Pact: the French reply<sup>4</sup> contained nothing calculated to modify answer the Germans had already given.<sup>5</sup> That answer had contained certain positive suggestions of which no mention was made in French reply. Germany would on no account accept mutual assistance clause.

(2) Danube Pact: the German government were awaiting replies to questions they had addressed to Paris and Rome.

(3) Armaments Convention: The German government await proposals from the other Powers concerned. Situation had changed entirely since French refusal of last April.<sup>6</sup> The highly armed nations had increased their armaments in the air and otherwise, and situation had been further modified by Franco-Italian agreement<sup>7</sup> and Franco-Russian entente.

(4) Return of Germany to the League: This could only be contemplated when all German requirements had been met and as a *last* step in the whole complex negotiations.

Baron von Neurath remarked that the Air convention was only simple and concrete proposal contained in Anglo-French communiqué. The

<sup>1</sup> This telegram, No. 50 of even date, received by telephone at 5.20 p.m., is not printed; it gave an English translation of the text of the German Government's reply to the London communiqué of February 3 (cf. No. 443). The German reply was printed in *The Times* on February 16, p. 12, and as No. 6 in Cmd. 5143 of 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 490.

<sup>3</sup> The text here appears to be corrupt. A printed text read: 'in regard to—(1) The Eastern Pact'.

<sup>4</sup> Of January 15; cf. No. 342, note 1.

<sup>5</sup> In their memorandum of September 8, 1934; cf. No. 85, note 1.

<sup>6</sup> A reference to the French note of April 17, 1934; see Volume VI, No. 395.

<sup>7</sup> Of January 7; cf. No. 335, enclosure.



German government were quite ready to enter into immediate negotiations for that convention but strongly favoured bilateral preliminary conversations with Great Britain alone in the first instance either at Berlin or London but preferably at Berlin owing to great personal interest taken in this matter by German Chancellor. It would of course be for His Majesty's Government to decide whom they should send here for this purpose but His Excellency indicated that these preliminary conversations need not necessarily be confined to Air convention alone.

I pointed out that the other Locarno Powers might think it odd that such bilateral conversations should take place but Baron von Neurath declared that the German government felt no confidence in round-table discussions, anyhow until ground had been carefully prepared by preliminary conversations suggested. The other Locarno Powers could moreover be kept fully informed of course of those conversations. His Excellency seemed to fear general discussions would again place Germany before a fait accompli and my assurances to the contrary failed to move him.

Repeated to Paris, Rome and Brussels.

#### No. 447

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 14, 10.20 p.m.)*  
*No. 53 Telegraphic [C 1223/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 14, 1935, 10.22 p.m.

My telegram No. 51.<sup>1</sup>

French Ambassador tells me that he enquired of Minister for Foreign Affairs why I had been received half an hour before himself. Baron von Neurath replied that it was because I had been the first to inform German Government of provisional terms of Anglo-French communiqué on February 3rd and because His Majesty's Government had been originators of proposed air convention.

Monsieur François Poncet then raised objection to proposal in German reply for preliminary Anglo-German conversations and elicited from Baron von Buelow [? Neurath] that this was the Chancellor's own suggestion: the English and French had had bilateral conversations; it was only natural that the English and Germans should have them too. My French colleague pointed out that cases were not parallel as Anglo-French conversations had merely served to launch the idea of an air convention. French Ambassador then suggested to His Excellency that conversations might begin in the first instance between Baron von Neurath and French and British Ambassadors in Berlin assisted if need be later on by officials from Quai d'Orsay and the Foreign Office. To this suggestion it seems Baron von Neurath took kindly and thought it would be acceptable to the German Chancellor. Monsieur

<sup>1</sup> No. 446.

François Poncet however doubts whether French Government will consent to even preliminary conversations taking place in Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

Repeated to Paris, Rome and Brussels.

<sup>2</sup> In minutes on this telegram and on No. 446 Mr. Wigram, Mr. Sargent, Sir R. Vansittart, and Mr. Seymour commented as follows. Mr. Wigram wrote on February 15 that so far 'as any bilateral German-British discussion is concerned, it seems increasingly dangerous to proceed without further preliminary discussion with the French'. Mr. Sargent remarked on the same day that the German answer was 'very ingenious'. 'Instead of raising difficulties or asking questions, as we had expected, they merely ignore the points which they dislike. By thus leaving us guessing they no doubt hope to tempt us into those bilateral negotiations which is their present objective.' But he thought that Sir E. Phipps's [*sic*] proposal that the ground should be cleared by discussions between the French and British Ambassadors and Herr von Neurath 'seems, taking it all round, to be the most promising'. He recalled the six months (February-September 1925) of careful negotiations which produced the Locarno agreements and remarked: 'The nexus of problems with which we are at present faced is infinitely more complicated . . . and I venture to think that for this reason even greater deliberation and caution will be necessary on this occasion. . . .' Sir R. Vansittart agreed generally, also on February 15, with Mr. Sargent and thought that the first step should be 'some form of consultation with both France and Italy; and that we sh[oul]d endeavour thus to obtain their concurrence in the discussion being continued by the Ambassadors at Berlin . . .'. Mr. Seymour noted on February 18: 'The S. of S. discussed these questions with Sir R. Vansittart, Mr. Eden and Mr. Sargent last night and this morning.'

#### No. 448

*Memorandum by Mr. Sargent on the occasion for conclusion of proposed air agreement<sup>1</sup>*

[C 1341/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 14, 1935

There seem to be three possible occasions:—

- (1) Before and independently of the proposed 'general settlement'. This is favoured by Germany.
- (2) Concurrently with, and as part of, the proposed 'general settlement'.
- (3) After, and as a result of, the failure of the proposed 'general settlement'. This is what the French are really aiming at, though they do not yet say so.

As regards (1):

*Argument in favour.* If we believe that there is a real German air danger threatening this country, and that the proposed air agreement will reduce that danger, the sooner we conclude it the better it will be. Public opinion will not understand why its conclusion should be made dependent on such

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sargent described this memorandum as 'an attempt to clear my own mind' as there appeared to be 'a certain amount of confusion as to what is the policy of H.M. Government in the matter'.

questions as the Eastern Pact, in which British interests are in no way concerned.

*Argument against.* By concluding the proposed air agreement independently of a 'general settlement', Germany will obtain the legalisation of her air force without giving any counterpart in the way of security or limitation, and will have no further inducement to proceed with the 'general settlement'.

As regards (2):

*Argument in favour.* Germany will not get the advantages of legalisation by means of the air agreement, except in return for counter concessions granted by her in the 'general settlement'.

*Arguments against.* The chances of a 'general settlement' are not bright, in view of such snags as, for instance, the Eastern Pact. Moreover Germany is not likely to be willing at this late date to pay much for the legalisation of her air force. In these circumstances, if we make the air agreement dependent on the 'general settlement' we risk losing it altogether. But assuming the air agreement to be a measure for increasing British security, how can we justify abandoning it because the 'general settlement' has not materialised, especially if, as we hope, we succeed in laying the blame for the failure at the door of Germany? The failure, in such circumstances, of a 'general settlement' would presumably increase, and not decrease, the existing danger to British security, and would therefore render the conclusion of the air agreement not less but more necessary. If, in these circumstances, we were to say that as there was no 'general settlement' there was not going to be any air agreement, would not the effect be very serious both on the French Government and on British public opinion? The French would at once proceed to a Franco-Russian alliance; and as for the British public, would it not be very bewildered if, after having been told of the imminence of the German air danger, H.M. Government were suddenly to withdraw the constructive remedy which they themselves had put forward as a means of meeting it?

As regards (3):

*Argument in favour.* We should still be able to try to work the air agreement into the 'general settlement' without losing it altogether if the 'general settlement' failed to materialise.

*Argument against.* The negotiation of an air agreement after the failure of a 'general settlement' would almost inevitably result in a defensive agreement between Great Britain, France, Italy and Belgium and against Germany. It might even—as we know the French want—develop into a purely Anglo-French agreement, the precursor of a direct military alliance.

*Letter from Mr. Strang (Geneva) to Mr. Wigram (Received February 19)*  
 [C 1372/55/18]

*Confidential*

GENEVA, February 14, 1935

My dear Wigram,

I took an opportunity today of talking to Avenol about the London agreement of February 3rd.

He said that with the conclusion of this agreement we had acquired a position of peculiar influence in Europe. Nobody could speak with such authority at Berlin as ourselves. We had taken the initiative and he trusted that we should not surrender it. No Government but ours could bring the operation to a happy conclusion, but it would be a long and delicate operation. He hoped, if he might say so without impertinence, that we should be very patient and very firm, and that we should pay every possible regard to Germany's dignity.

The French were subject to influences hostile to a Franco-German understanding. Laval himself was no longer so much in favour of a rapprochement with Germany as he was a month or two ago. The Soviet Government, Avenol thought, founded their foreign policy, in part at any rate, on the perpetuation of Franco-German discord, and they were making their influence felt in Paris. The Quai d'Orsay, he believed, that is to say Léger and Massigli, were not in favour of a bilateral Franco-Soviet treaty and were hostile to any increased intimacy in the Franco-Soviet connection. It was in order, if possible, to side-track the Soviet demand for a bilateral agreement, that they worked so hard to get the Soviet Union into the League.

The Little Entente, and especially the Balkan Entente, were very close to the Russians in all this, and their influence was being used in the same direction, especially through personalities like Politis.<sup>1</sup> In Weygand's day the Little Entente had a great pull in Paris: Gamelin, however, unlike his predecessor,<sup>2</sup> does not play politics and has no special *penchant* for the Little Entente. It was also worth noting, he said, that the three members of the Little Entente did not all look at the German problem quite in the same light. The Yugoslavs were less strongly opposed to a general settlement with Germany than were the Czechs and Roumanians, and might even come to favour it. Of the other two, Titulesco was more active in working against Franco-German appeasement than Benes, but it was not certain that Benes was not, for all his apparent moderation, the more dangerous.

The London communiqué obviously brought no pleasure either to the Russians or to the Little Entente, and the prospect of a Four Great Power agreement played painfully on the latter's anti-revisionist nerves.

Yours ever,  
 W. STRANG

<sup>1</sup> M. Nicholas Politis was Greek Minister at Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 208, note 11.

**No. 450**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 15, 12.8 p.m.)*

*No. 25 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1249/55/18]*

PARIS, February 15, 1935

Although the German reply<sup>1</sup> to the Anglo-French proposals have [*sic*] not yet been published, French press this morning contains full and accurate summaries.

2. Comment fastens on the obvious hope of Germany to separate Great Britain from France by accepting to discuss the air convention while passing over in silence the other items in the proposal. It is contended that Germany expects thus to calm British apprehension regarding the air menace and also to secure for herself both a legalisation of her most important arm as well as a guarantee for her own security in Western Europe. At the same time evading the Eastern and Danubian pacts, in which she is aware that British opinion is not greatly interested, she hopes to remain free to pursue her revisionist policies in the East and Austria.

3. French opinion declines to believe that His Majesty's Government will fall into the trap and declares that the Anglo-French proposals are one and indivisible [*sic*].

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 446, note 1.

**No. 451**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 15, 5.15 p.m.)*

*No. 26 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1287/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, February 15, 1935

I learn from sources in close touch with official circles that first reactions towards German reply are somewhat as follows:—

The tone of the reply is considered to be rather off-hand. Its summary treatment of all questions except the Air Convention arouses suspicion. The proposal to negotiate and bring into operation such Convention at once is held to be a breach of principle of simultaneity as agreed upon in London and to be inadmissible. As regards the next step, it is thought that there must first be an exchange of views between British and French Governments.

Whilst the above represents views of Quai d'Orsay and of the Press generally, it is possible that Monsieur Laval personally may take a less rigid or negative view. Force of opinion in the Cabinet and in Parliament is, however, likely to be such as to prevent him from going very far with personal inclinations.

Repeated to Berlin, Rome and Brussels.

No. 452

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 15, 6.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 56 Telegraphic [C 1286/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 15, 1935, 6.34 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Belgian Minister also came to see me after receiving German reply.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told him that there were only two practical suggestions in the London communiqué viz. the Air Convention and in a lesser degree the Danube Pact. Regarding armaments convention His Excellency said that Germany would not make any proposals herself but would await proposals of other Powers; no kind of discrimination could be made against her as regards effectives or quantities etc. Baron von Neurath expressed his usual scepticism as to likelihood of agreement but declared himself in favour of discussions being confined to Locarno Powers in the first instance with possible subsequent inclusion of the Little Entente and Russia if and when Locarno Powers had reached agreement amongst themselves. He strongly favoured, however, speedy conclusion of Air Convention before discussion of armaments.

Repeated to Paris, Rome and Brussels.

<sup>1</sup> No. 453 below. These telegrams were despatched in reverse order.

No. 453

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 15, 6.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 55 Telegraphic [C 1285/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, February 15, 1935, 6.35 p.m.

My telegram No. 50.<sup>1</sup>

Italian Ambassador called on me today after receiving from Minister for Foreign Affairs text of German reply. He put to Baron von Neurath following questions:

1. Did German Government contemplate that any numbers of aircraft of the respective signatories should be mentioned in the proposed air convention? His Excellency replied in a decided negative; the air convention should not go into any unnecessary details but should be confined to broad lines (see my telegram No. 42).<sup>2</sup>

2. From juridical point of view would it not be necessary to abolish part 5 of the Treaty of Versailles before concluding Air Convention? His Excellency replied that German Government had no interest in raising that point.

3. Did Baron von Neurath think that French wished all subjects mentioned in the London communiqué to be brought into an agreement or agreements to be signed simultaneously? His Excellency replied that he had no certain

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 446, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> No. 421.

information on this point but he thought that the French had that wish. He was definitely opposed to this for he felt that in that case nothing would be concluded at all.

Impression of Italian Ambassador is that the only part of the London communiqué that Germans mean to accept is air convention and that their consent to that instrument depends on gratification of their amour propre by our agreeing to the bilateral conversations they demand of us. I fear that this is a correct view.

Perhaps we could induce the French to agree to quite superficial conversations taking place between us and the Germans in the first instance to be followed if necessary by Franco-German conversations before a general discussion. If we all agree to conclude an air convention before discussing other matters the conversations thereon need not presumably be lengthy.

Repeated to Rome, Paris and Brussels.

#### No. 454

*Sir J. Simon to Viscount Chilston (Moscow)*

*No. 13 Telegraphic [C 1221/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 15, 1935, 7 p.m.*

When discussing the subject of the joint Anglo-French communiqué with Sir R. Vansittart on February 13, Soviet Ambassador asked what the position would be if the German Government returned a favourable reply to the air convention proposal; a not unpromising reply in regard to the Rome Agreement on Austria; a negative reply in regard to the League; and an entirely unfavourable reply in regard to the Eastern Pact?

He was informed that it was idle to speculate at the present stage. The German reply would be received shortly, and it would no doubt be possible for M. Maisky to discuss the matter more satisfactorily with the facts before him. His hypothesis was possible, though something better might be hoped for. In any case on receipt of German reply there would doubtless be occasional necessity for further communication between the joint authors of the communiqué. Such a contingency was provided for by its last paragraph.

M. Maisky agreed that we must necessarily await the German reply before considering the next step. But he was obliged to say that there was considerable suspicion in his country upon this matter, and that if agreement were reached on all or most of the other points, and the Eastern Pact were blocked, this would strengthen the belief that the Western Powers were disinteresting themselves in Eastern Europe and leaving Germany free for future aggression there. To obviate such suspicion he urged that we should make a further reference to the Eastern Pact in the House of Commons, making it clear that the project still enjoyed the moral support which we had given it last summer.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On July 13, 1934; see 292 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 691-700.

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 50 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1288/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 15, 1935*

French Ambassador stated on February 14, that French Government had succeeded in persuading M. Litvinoff to revise his first apprehension as to Anglo-French conversations in London and to give his general approval to conclusions reached thereat. French Ambassador said M. Litvinoff was now prepared to express this approval openly and French Government wished to know urgently whether we agreed with them in thinking this advisable.

French Ambassador was informed that only possible answer to his question seemed to be an affirmative. There was obviously every advantage in the U.S.S.R. approving what we had done rather than remaining in a doubtful position which would cause apprehensions and suspicions not only among their own people but perhaps in the Little Entente as well.<sup>1</sup>

Repeated by telegraph to Berlin, Moscow and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Vansittart in *Lessons of My Life* (London, undated), p. 45, refers to his conversations at this time with M. Corbin, and states that a facsimile copy of M. Corbin's report of February 14 of these conversations was presented by M. Laval to the German authorities and published by them in 1942.



## CHAPTER IV

# Suggested visit of British ministers to Berlin: British White Paper on Defence: German rearmament measures: Anglo-German Conversations February 15—March 27, 1935

No. 456

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 51 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1224/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 15, 1935*

Your telegram No. 24.<sup>1</sup>

French Ambassador called on February 14 and, referring to suggestion made by German Minister for Foreign Affairs that some British and French officials of high standing should shortly visit Berlin,<sup>2</sup> said that his Government felt strongly that if anything of the sort were contemplated both countries should as suggested send representatives and not only one.

He was informed in reply to a request for the views of His Majesty's Government that it appeared neither necessary, nor possible, to form an opinion on this suggestion until actual terms of German reply to Anglo-French communiqué were known.

French Ambassador agreed but emphasized that French Government would wish to consult us and would expect to be consulted on such a project before any decision was taken seeing that it involved the despatch of experts by both countries.

Repeated to Berlin, Brussels, Moscow and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 442.      <sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 443.

No. 457

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 52 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1225/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 15, 1935*

French Ambassador on February 14 alluded to recent conversation between the French Ambassador in Warsaw and M. Beck regarding Eastern Pact. He felt that M. Beck was as usual evading the issue; moreover, French Government believed that the Polish Government was strengthened in its attitude by unauthorised and indeed mendacious reports which had been set afloat

in Warsaw to the effect that His Majesty's Government had disinterested themselves entirely in the matter of Eastern Pact. M. Corbin begged His Majesty's Government to reaffirm at Warsaw the position which we had originally taken up last summer in regard to the Pact<sup>1</sup> and to make it clear to the Polish Government that we had not in any way modified our view since then.<sup>2</sup>

Addressed to Paris, repeated to Berlin, Moscow, Rome, Warsaw.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 454, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> In a minute of February 15 Mr. Sargent wrote: 'It surely would be somewhat invidious and open to misconception if, within three weeks of the issue of the Anglo-French communiqué, we were called upon to reaffirm one particular clause in that communiqué. I venture to think that we should firmly refuse to do so on the ground that naturally we must be considered to abide by the terms of the whole of this communiqué.

'As regards the Eastern Pact, what we abide by is not the July scheme, as the French and Russians are trying to imply, but the actual wording of the communiqué, i.e. "the conclusion of pacts freely negotiated between all the interested parties ensuring mutual assistance in Eastern Europe". The French know perfectly well, and no doubt the Russians also, that this wording was carefully chosen precisely in order to relieve us of any obligation to support the Eastern Pact in its July form, and in order to enable fresh schemes to be evolved in its place.'

#### No. 458

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 16, 10.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 107 Telegraphic [C 1313/1/18]*

ROME, February 16, 1935, 9.35 p.m.

I hear that agreement on outstanding Saar questions mainly financial and economic has been reached and that various documents will be signed here very shortly.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Knox tells me that no Council meeting will therefore be held though French had endeavoured to obtain one to deal with refugees question.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> The report of the Committee of Three, adopted at Naples on February 19, and the texts of the documents referred to, are printed in *L/N.O.J.*, March 1935, pp. 461-90.

#### No. 459

*Sir J. Simon to Sir H. Montgomery (The Hague)*  
*No. 68 [C 1113/55/18]\**

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 16, 1935

Sir,

On the 8th February the Netherlands Minister informed the Lord Privy Seal<sup>1</sup> that he was confident that he would be asked on his forthcoming return

<sup>1</sup> The first two paragraphs of this despatch were based on Mr. Eden's record of February 8 of his conversation with M. van Swinderen on that day.

to Holland on leave of absence whether or not the position of that country in relation to the proposed air convention had been discussed at the recent meeting with the French Ministers in London. There were reports to this effect in the German press and M. van Swinderen said he would be grateful to Mr. Eden if he could be informed what the truth was and whether the position of the Netherlands had been a subject of discussion.

2. Mr. Eden told M. van Swinderen that, so far as he could recollect, the name of Holland had never been raised at any time during our discussions with the French Ministers. Certainly there had been no discussion as to her position in relation to the air convention. Indeed, one reason for this omission was abundantly clear. It was proposed that this air convention should be negotiated in the first instance between the Locarno Powers and that was why discussion had been confined to their position. This did not imply, of course, any lack of friendship on our part towards Holland, and if at any time the Netherlands Government wished to make observations to us, His Majesty's Government would be happy to listen to them. The Minister thanked Mr. Eden and stated that this assurance would be of great value to him at The Hague. M. van Swinderen went on to say that his Government had been approached by the Swedish Government some little time ago before the London conversations as to the possibility of joint pressure being brought to bear by the neutral Powers upon Berlin to induce the German Government to return to Geneva. The Netherlands Government, however, were not in favour of this idea,<sup>2</sup> which they thought might cause resentment in Berlin. They had expressed this view to the Swedish Government. Before the Swedish Government had received this information, they had once again approached the Netherlands Government within the last few days after the successful outcome of the London conversations. M. van Swinderen said he was doubtful whether even now the Netherlands Government would wish to join in any representations to Berlin, though he appreciated that the position was different from what it had been a few weeks ago.

3. On the 8th February the Belgian Ambassador mentioned the same question in conversation with Sir Robert Vansittart.<sup>3</sup> Baron Cartier evinced some anxiety lest the Dutch should be rebuffed on approaching His Majesty's Government in the matter. He said that the Belgian Government had evidence, which they would send us, that the German General Staff had plans for beginning the next campaign in the west by a drive through Holland and not through Belgium, thus reaching the sea and turning the Belgian defence, and went on to say that the Dutch were a public danger in their present unpreparedness and inefficiency. Their one redeeming feature was that they were very competent airmen, and he thought that in that respect they had a future.

4. Baron Cartier went on to enquire whether there had been any discussion of Holland during the London conversations with the French, and, on being

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 432.

<sup>3</sup> Paragraphs 3 and 4 of this despatch were based on Sir R. Vansittart's record of February 9 on his conversation with Baron Cartier on the previous day.

informed in the negative, asked if Sir Robert Vansittart could express any personal or private view as to the possibility of the Dutch being admitted to the proposed convention, which he felt sure would be in everybody's interest. Sir Robert Vansittart replied that he could not well express any opinion. He had no idea what was really in the Dutch mind; surely in any case such an initiative would have to come from the Dutch themselves? Baron Cartier agreed and the subject was pursued no further.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

**No. 460**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 17, 9.30 a.m.)  
No. 110 Telegraphic [C 1314/55/18]*

*Immediate*

ROME, February 17, 1935, 2.45 a.m.

I saw Signor Suvich this evening<sup>1</sup> and asked him whether Italian Government had yet considered German reply. His Excellency said that he hoped to discuss matter with the Head of Government tomorrow morning but would give me his personal views. If Signor Mussolini differs he will inform me.

2. While reply was extremely vague German Government had fastened on the one agreement they thought favourable to themselves and had practically ignored all other questions. Conclusion of Air Pact implied possession of military aeroplanes and thus abrogation of air clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.

3. Moreover by picking out air agreement Germany hoped to create trouble between Great Britain and France; former country in German opinion attached high value to air pact and by playing up to this belief and suggesting Anglo-German conversations Germany hoped to win over Great Britain to her views. But France could never agree to conclusion of air pact alone.

4. Principles enunciated in Anglo-French conversations could be dealt with in one of two ways. Either negotiations could be simultaneous and concurrent on all points or various questions could be dealt with in turn. Arguing from the French standpoint he would say that security must receive priority to be followed by general armaments problem finishing up with air pact. I interjected—speaking personally and with view to exploration of ground—could not air pact be taken first but come into force only on successful conclusion of agreements on other subjects? His Excellency did not wish to answer until he had opportunity of consulting Head of Government. In any case he said the Italian Government must consult French Government in accordance with recent agreement but speaking personally he did not favour such a sequence since conclusion even conditional of air pact would give Germany tactical superiority.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin, Brussels and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was drafted on February 16.

**No. 461**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 17, 9.30 a.m.)  
No. 28 Telegraphic [C 1311/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, February 17, 1935, 3.50 a.m.

From informal conversation which I had with M. Léger this evening<sup>1</sup> I think that the French government will take the line that if His Majesty's Government wish to respond to the German invitation to an Anglo-German conversation it is not for the French Government to endeavour to deter them. They will, however, claim under the London Declaration that British visit to Berlin should be preceded by further exchange of views between London and Paris which might be conducted through diplomatic channels.

I think M. Corbin will receive instructions to speak to you in that sense indicating at the same time a number of points on which it would be well to reach some understanding before Anglo-German conversation takes place.

Repeated to Berlin, Rome, Brussels and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was drafted on February 16.

**No. 462**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 17, 10 a.m.)  
No. 29 Telegraphic [C 1312/55/18]*

PARIS, February 17, 1935, 8.50 a.m.

My telegram No. 24.<sup>1</sup>

Monsieur Léger gave me this evening<sup>2</sup> following further information as regards genesis of his plan for securing at early date benefits of aerial convention without releasing Germany from air clauses of Treaty of Versailles pending conclusion of general limitation convention.

He started from the assumption that unless discussion of aerial convention was to wait on negotiation of general convention there were only three possible courses:—

(1) To negotiate aerial convention without conditions. This course, in his opinion, was open to the following objections. First, by making so large a hole in part 5 of the Treaty of Versailles it would remove any further interest which Germany might have in obtaining her legal release. Once it were recognised, if only tacitly, that part 5 was no longer intact she would virtually have gained her point and any chance there may be of securing general convention would be yet further diminished. Secondly this course would have bad psychological effect in France where it would be quoted that Great Britain having secured an arrangement as regards arming to which she is most exposed would lose interest in seeking limitation of land armaments.

<sup>1</sup> No. 442.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram was drafted on February 16.

Thirdly if aerial convention were negotiated independently of general convention it would be necessary to insert figures. Owing to the probably exorbitant German demands we should be launched on a negotiation which might prove nearly as lengthy and difficult as the general convention itself.

(2) To conclude an arrangement whereby Germany would be guaranteed by other parties (who would also guarantee each other) but would not . . .<sup>3</sup> them pending conclusion of general convention. She would thus require no air force until the day when its existence was legalised. This course was abandoned on the ground that Germany would reject it as being derogatory to her.

(3) The course mentioned in my telegram under reference, namely to negotiate aerial convention at once subject to conditions (a) that it would remain inoperative pending conclusion of general convention, (b) that it would become instantly and automatically operative in the event of an aerial aggression by any party against another party.

I gathered that this plan has so far found favour in higher quarters that jurists have set to work on it.

Repeated to Berlin, Rome, Brussels, and Moscow.

<sup>3</sup> The text was here uncertain.

#### No. 463

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 18, 11.50 a.m.)*

*No. 59 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1330/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 18, 1935

My telegram No. 53.<sup>1</sup>

I hear from a good source that proposal for preliminary Anglo-German conversations was originally made by Herr von Ribbentrop and was inserted in German reply by Chancellor's orders.

It seems that Ministry of Foreign Affairs are furious not only at Herr von Ribbentrop's interference but because they feel this attempt to divide us from the French to be too clumsy to succeed.

<sup>1</sup> No. 447.

#### No. 464

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 18, 5.20 p.m.)*

*No. 14 Telegraphic [C 1338/55/18]*

MOSCOW, February 18, 1935, 6.20 p.m.

Your telegram No. 14.<sup>1</sup>

German answer<sup>2</sup> has had a very bad press here, being described as a 'brazen challenge to all true champions of peace'. All press comments so far agree

<sup>1</sup> Of February 16, not printed.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 446.

in describing it as inspired by 'the friends of Hitler in London'. The Prime Minister in particular is mentioned several times as opposed to the Eastern Pact and encouraging the German Government in their rejection of it. 'Pravda' yesterday wrote that Germany could only give such a rebuff to France and her allies if she felt sure of support in London; and today's 'Izvestia' concludes its article as follows: 'the air convention is not in the least a guarantee against war. On the contrary, it increases the danger of war since it frees the hands of German imperialists. Thus the entire responsibility for the maintenance of peace in Europe rests upon those leaders of English politics who, under disguise of working for peace, are in reality strengthening the position of the enemies of peace.'

**No. 465**

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 18, 5.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 15 Telegraphic [C 1339/55/18]*

MOSCOW, February 18, 1935, 6.20 p.m.

Your telegram No. 50 Saving to Paris.<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday the French Ambassador gave M. Litvinov to understand that the French and British Governments would be glad if the Soviet Government were to declare their views of Anglo-French proposals should they feel inclined to do so.

I understand that M. Litvinov seemed pleased that the Soviet Union should thus have been recognised as a Power interested in conclusions reached in declaration though not a party to it. I gather that he replied that although declaration contained no insistence upon necessity of an Eastern Security Pact but only a mention of it nevertheless he approved its general tenour as being directed towards promotion of peace in Europe but only on the understanding that proposals must be taken as a whole and be interdependent and not treated separately. If he obtained approval of his Government he would cause a communiqué to be published probably in the above sense and would at the same time instruct Soviet Ambassador[s] in Paris and London to present notes to French and British Governments to the same effect.

I expect to see M. Litvinov tomorrow.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin, Brussels and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 455.

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 22)*

*No. 181 [C 1440/55/18]*

*Confidential*

ROME, February 18, 1935

Sir,

Signor Mussolini in a conversation which I had with him some little time ago (before the question of the possible conclusion between the Locarno Powers of an air convention became a practical problem) spoke to me very frankly about the German mentality and German intentions. He said that he feared that that mentality was the same to-day as it was before the war and that in fact it had never changed. It was particularly dangerous because Germany believed that she had a mission to direct and organise Europe and she intended for that purpose to become the strongest military Power on the Continent.

2. The labour organisation now existing in Germany could not but increase German military potentialities. Service in that organisation was now for one year. Previously the members had only been given pickaxes, etc.; they had now received rifles. There was no doubt that Germany, with its additional million inhabitants derived from the Saar and its increasing birth-rate, would have before long a population of seventy million, all animated with the idea that they were a chosen and superior race.

3. Apart from this, the German air fleet was becoming most formidable. Signor Mussolini said that he believed that they were now, or would very shortly be, in possession of two thousand aeroplanes capable of military use, and they were training an unheard-of number of pilots. Arrangements were being organised by which a whole division could be transported by aeroplane, complete with field and machine guns, and landed in any given locality. This would mean that Germany could send five thousand men behind the French lines at any given point. He believed that German aviation was to-day equal to that of France. He said that in these circumstances he thought we should be very wise to create a strong air force at the earliest possible moment. London was so vast and offered such a concentrated target that it was a temptation as an objective for an air force.

4. He said that he did not think that Germany was necessarily inspired by a feeling of ill-will towards other races, but that a number of them [Germans], and those very influential, firmly held that other races would be happier under German leadership. He said he feared that English minds could not realise the German mentality. For instance, was it possible in England that there should be a Legion of Death which now existed in Germany, which was devoted to killing people dangerous to the régime? The death of the engineer in Prague was due to this organisation.<sup>1</sup> He was afraid that we were too

<sup>1</sup> Herr Rudolf Formis, a German émigré, had been murdered on January 23, 1935, by German agents at a lonely inn not far from Prague where he had set up a broadcasting station for the dissemination of anti-Nazi propaganda. Cf. *The Times*, January 25, p. 13, and January 26, p. 11.



likely to be gulled by soft words from Germany and not realise or prepare for danger from that side.

5. I said to him that, admitting what he said was true, what would he do? Would he not try to come to an arrangement with Germany as soon as possible as regards limitation of armaments? He said that he certainly would, and here, of course, he regretted as usual the French folly in rejecting Mr. MacDonald's and his own plans as regards disarmament. But he thought that while it was desirable to endeavour to reach an international agreement about armaments, he sincerely trusted that even if agreement were come to we should not relax our precautions for the future. He repeated two or three times how necessary he thought it was that English public opinion should become aware of what was fermenting in Germany, and he laid particular and special emphasis on the necessity, in his view, that the United Kingdom should build up a strong air force at the earliest possible moment.

5. Signor Mussolini showed during this conversation the most friendly feelings towards the United Kingdom. You will see that the conversation was of an intimate and rather special character. In view of the fact that Signor Mussolini treats Ambassadors, when discussing such subjects, as friends and hardly as officials, I should be grateful if what His Excellency said could be treated as strictly confidential.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC DRUMMOND

P.S. On leaving I said to His Excellency that I appreciated the irony of his act in presenting to Bolzano a statue of Drusus Germanicus to take the place of a German poet which was now there.<sup>2</sup> He grinned and said 'I have behaved very well. I only moved the statue of the German poet to another part of the square, while if the Germans had been in my place, they would certainly have destroyed the statue which I have only put in another place.'

<sup>2</sup> See *The Times*, March 5, p. 19.

#### No. 467

*Sir N. Henderson (Belgrade) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 21)*

*No. 53 [C 1406/55/18]*

BELGRADE, *February 18, 1935*

Sir,

I have the honour to acquaint you that the Yugoslav Government are much exercised in their minds as to what is the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards the Eastern Security Pact in the event of Germany declining, as they believe she will, to participate in it. Both the Prince Regent and the Political Director of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with whom I had a long conversation on the subject to-day, have begged me to ascertain this for their information. I have told both Prince Paul and M. Pourić that

I am unaware of the exact terms of the conversations which you had on this subject with MM. Flandin and Laval in London, and have suggested that they should instruct the Yugoslav Minister in London to make this enquiry. It would, nevertheless, be useful for me if I could be informed of the line which I should take with the Yugoslav Government in regard to this question.

2. In order to understand the anxieties of the Yugoslav Government on this score certain facts must be borne in mind. In the first place, the Eastern Pact in itself has never appealed to the Yugoslav Government. They are only interested in it as a partner of the Little Entente with Czechoslovakia. If the pact is realised with German and Polish participation, so much the better. As allies of Czechoslovakia they would welcome it but it does not affect their own position in particular. On the other hand, if Germany refuses to sign it, in which case Poland will not do so either and if France, as she has announced that she intends to do, persists in negotiating the pact without Germany, they feel that they, as Czechoslovakia's partner, are being dragged against their will and against their own interests into a Franco-Soviet combination against Germany. If such a combination has the approval and moral support of Great Britain their uneasiness would be allayed. Without an assurance to that effect they would, however, regard it with the utmost misgiving.

3. As I have reported in another despatch<sup>1</sup> this concern of the Yugoslav Government as to their future relations with Germany is increasingly evident. Since the Franco-Italian Agreement at Rome it has been especially noticeable. I asked M. Pourić to-day if the French Government had not kept them posted as regards the London negotiations. He replied that all they had been informed was that His Majesty's Government had now withdrawn their objections even to the clause respecting mutual assistance in the Eastern pact. He then launched out into a tirade against French indifference at Rome to Yugoslav interests. Nothing had been said there even about Albania. France never had been displeased that Italy's attention should continue to be diverted to Albania and it was French money which had, in fact, enabled Italy to recommence subsidising that country. If Yugoslavia followed Poland's example and came to terms with Germany it would be the fault of France and not a case of Yugoslav disloyalty.

4. I told M. Pourić that I could not agree with this point of view. Possibly a tripartite agreement would have been more satisfactory but Signor Mussolini had consistently objected to this. The composition of the Franco-Italian quarrels had cleared the air, and not complicated the situation. An Austrian integrity pact in which the three countries participated on an equal footing was in itself a decided step on the right road, even if Italy and Yugoslavia could not come to a bilateral agreement beforehand. Now that his

<sup>1</sup> A reference presumably to Yugoslav despatch No. 45 of February 10, received February 21, not printed. In that despatch Sir N. Henderson had referred to Yugoslavia's 'extreme reluctance' to consider participation in any multilateral pacts which might not include Germany, and added: 'It would, of course, be equally true to say that Yugoslavia has still no desire to combine with Germany against any other group. . . . Nevertheless, the possibility of a Yugoslav bilateral agreement with Germany cannot be absolutely excluded. . . .'

hands were free Signor Mussolini would probably find it much easier to settle the differences between the two countries in a straightforward manner. There was no doubt that he was definitely in favour of doing so and I regretted on this account M. Jevtić's<sup>2</sup> reluctance to encourage this tendency by making some conciliatory reference to Italy in the broadcast which he had said he would give on the subject of Yugoslavia's international relations. There, at least, I could tell him what the attitude of His Majesty's Government was: they would warmly welcome an Italo-Yugoslav rapprochement as in the best interests of both countries and of peace generally.

I have, &c.,

NEVILLE HENDERSON

<sup>2</sup> Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs.

No. 468

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 32 Telegraphic [C 1225/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 19, 1935, 4 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 20.<sup>1</sup>

I shall be glad if you will now resume the enquiries which you initiated before the London meeting in order to ascertain the French Government's views respecting the possibility of the negotiation with Germany of some alternative to the proposed Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee.<sup>2</sup> For the reasons stated in paragraphs 2 and 3 of my telegram No. 21<sup>3</sup> we think that we are entitled to expect the French Government to work out some alternative scheme for German acceptance which would give them and M. Litvinov the satisfaction they require without being open to certain of the German criticisms of the original proposal.

The following comments are for your own guidance in these enquiries.

Is it possible, in the place of the Eastern Pact as outlined in the July scheme, to construct a satisfactory alternative on the basis of the provisions for non-aggression already in force in Eastern Europe?

Germany has already in the German-Russian Treaty of Berlin of 1926 (renewed in 1931)<sup>4</sup> and in the Conciliation Treaty of 1929, ratified in 1933,<sup>5</sup> the practical equivalent of a pact of non-aggression with the Soviet Union. In her Locarno arbitration treaty with Poland,<sup>6</sup> coupled with the German-Polish

<sup>1</sup> No. 393.

<sup>2</sup> In a minute of February 6 Mr. Sargent described these discussions as 'the hurried enquiries which Sir George Clerk and Mr. Harvey initiated in Paris and in the train before the meeting, and which Sir R. Vansittart continued during the meeting. At present we have had no answer as far as I know to these enquiries and we are entitled to insist on having one.'

<sup>3</sup> No. 390.

<sup>4</sup> See *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 125, pp. 738-41 and vol. 134, pp. 848-9.

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, vol. 130, pp. 758-60 and vol. 134, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> See *ibid.*, vol. 122, p. 288, note 1.

Declaration of January 1934,<sup>7</sup> Germany has similarly what amounts to a non-aggression pact with Poland. Furthermore, Germany declared in December 1933<sup>8</sup> and January 1934<sup>9</sup> her readiness to conclude non-aggression treaties with all her neighbours, including presumably Lithuania, and in her note to the French Government of September 1934<sup>10</sup> she stated that 'the best results would be achieved by the method of bilateral agreements'.

Poland has a bilateral non-aggression treaty with Russia<sup>11</sup> (good until 1945) and with Germany the above-mentioned Locarno Treaty and the joint declaration of January 1934.

Russia, as stated above, has a non-aggression treaty with Poland and another with Lithuania<sup>12</sup> (good until 1936) as well as her above-mentioned treaties with Germany.

Thus there is already in existence an almost complete network of non-aggression pacts covering the particular territories and frontiers directly involved in any conflict between Russia and Germany. In order to complete this network all that is necessary is that Germany should conclude a non-aggression treaty with Lithuania, and that all the existing Treaties should be given a similar duration, say 10 years from the conclusion of the proposed 'general settlement'.

If this network of bilateral pacts were thus completed, would it not be possible to produce an effective security system in Eastern Europe by superimposing upon it a system of French, German, and Russian guarantees?

Thus France would guarantee the existing Russo-German agreements and the Russo-Lithuanian non-aggression treaty, as well as the German-Lithuanian treaty still to be concluded. (France of course already by her Locarno Treaty with Poland guarantees the latter against Germany).

Russia would at the same time guarantee the German-Lithuanian non-aggression treaty to be concluded, and, if desired by Germany and Poland, the German-Polish treaties. She would also guarantee the main Locarno Treaty in so far as France and Germany are concerned.

Germany would similarly guarantee the Russo-Lithuanian treaty and Russo-Polish treaty.

In this way we would be taking Germany at her word by making use of the bilateral system which she affects to prefer, and would not be asking her to undertake any obligations which are contrary to her interests (for presumably she is directly concerned in preventing any Russian aggression on either Poland or Lithuania). Where the new scheme would fundamentally depart from the July scheme is that neither Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Estonia, nor Finland would form part of it. If the French feel that Czechoslovakia's participation is essential perhaps it could be arranged, but it is obviously not necessary and would certainly produce a complication. As for Estonia, Latvia, and Finland, it is difficult to see how France's security would be in

<sup>7</sup> Of January 26, 1934; cf. No. 1, note 5.

<sup>8</sup> See Volume VI, Nos. 97 and 114.

<sup>9</sup> See *ibid.*, No. 193, enclosure (p. 297).

<sup>10</sup> Of September 8, 1934; cf. No. 85.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. No. 111, note 2.

<sup>12</sup> Of September 28, 1926; see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 125, pp. 890-3, and vol. 134, pp. 993-4.

any way increased by their inclusion, though it is easier to understand Russia's desire to have them guaranteed. But inasmuch as they are not 'neighbours' of Germany and inasmuch as France, under the July scheme, definitely declined to guarantee them, it is impossible to insist on Germany and Poland doing so.

If the French still insist on Estonia and Latvia figuring in the scheme, it might be possible to induce Germany to conclude non-aggression treaties with these two States at the same time as she does so with Lithuania, and these treaties might be guaranteed by France and Russia. But this would seem to be overloading an already cumbrous scheme and will only add to the difficulties of finding an acceptable solution.

It is of course realised that such a variation of the July scheme would not meet the German objection to a French guarantee of a Russo-German arrangement, and to the intervention of Russia in Locarno: but it would appear to meet the more valid of Germany's other objections, and the Germans would thus find it more difficult to make out a good case before European public opinion.

You should be careful not to present these observations, which are merely suggestions for your own guidance in your conversations at the Quai d'Orsay, in the form of a cut-and-dried British scheme to replace the Eastern Pact, nor to represent His Majesty's Government as having reached any conclusions as regards the best means of meeting the German and Polish objections to the Franco-Russian scheme of last summer.

Another point to be borne in mind is that His Majesty's Government must avoid being drawn into a position where they might be urged either to accept the Soviet 'definition of the aggressor' themselves or to press Germany to do so.

Repeated to Moscow, Berlin, and Rome.

#### No. 469

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 19, 5.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 16 Telegraphic [C 1358/55/18]*

MOSCOW, February 19, 1935, 6.49 p.m.

My telegram No. 15.<sup>1</sup>

Litvinoff tells me that he is today drafting his instructions to the Soviet Ambassadors at Paris and London and that he will let me have a copy.

Speaking generally of the situation he expressed the hope that the proposals would be kept as a whole as otherwise there would scarcely seem to be in German reply a basis for negotiation of security guarantees in Europe. He had no desire that Germany and Poland should be *forced* to join in Eastern Pact: anyhow such a thing was impossible to do. He recognised principle of free negotiation; but it was impossible to make such concessions to Germany

<sup>1</sup> No. 465.

as would deprive the Pact of its essential value. If Germany and Poland did not want the Pact 'well' he said 'it can be made without them'.

French Ambassador used practically the same words to me yesterday.

I have long believed that Litvinoff never expected that Poland or Germany would subscribe.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin, Rome, and Brussels.

#### No. 470

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 19, 9.5 p.m.)*

*No. 60 Telegraphic [C 1356/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 19, 1935, 8.30 p.m.

The 'Berliner Tageblatt' tonight contains brief article stating 'a direct contact between men who have, abroad, the ear of the people and have public opinion behind them and the leading personality in Germany, is in the interest of both parties: further it must be of importance for the English representatives, in view of those negotiations, to get to know the new Germany'.

'Times' correspondent says he was approached semi-officially and asked to send a message explaining that this reference to 'representatives' meant that German Government hoped to receive visits from you *and* from Mr. Baldwin. They did not, however, like to put this more clearly. The 'Times' correspondent sent the message accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *The Times*, February 20, p. 14.

#### No. 471

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 394 [C 1386/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 19, 1935

Sir,

The French Ambassador saw me yesterday, and as our conversation was interrupted he came again to-day. A summary of what passed is as follows.

2. The Ambassador referred to the suggestion made in the German note that an Anglo-German conversation might take place on the proposed air pact. M. Laval was sure that His Majesty's Government would consider if a visit to Berlin would facilitate agreement or whether on the other hand it would confuse the issues and encourage Germany to formulate new requirements. The French Government, M. Corbin added, expressed no special view as to future procedure; it would be for His Majesty's Government to

decide, provided of course that the decision did not depart from the scheme of the communiqué. As for the Eastern Pact and the Austrian agreement, the French Government intended to resume conversations with Berlin on these matters as soon as they could. The Ambassador referred to the last sentence of the joint communiqué of February 3rd<sup>1</sup> and said that he supposed that conversations between the French and British Governments would now be necessary and that these would give the opportunity to *resserrer le programme* of the communiqué. As for the order which might be followed in any Anglo-German conversation, it might well be that the aerial convention would be first discussed, but that would not mean that a conclusion upon it would be arrived at separately from other issues.

3. Secondly, as to the content of an aerial convention, it would be important to determine its relation to the existing Locarno Treaty. For example, should it be a distinct convention, while the dispositions of Locarno were preserved? The French Government raised the question without answering it as they merely wanted to indicate to us some of the matters which must come under consideration.

4. Again, is an aerial convention possible without limitation of air forces? Could we contemplate that Germany could have aerial forces without limit of numbers? And if not, what limits? If His Majesty's Government thought it was too soon to go into figures, the French Government nevertheless put the question whether we did not think that the limits imposed upon France must leave that country with a superiority as compared with Germany. There were other questions which suggested themselves, but these might be reserved. The Ambassador assumed that the matters mentioned above might be the subject of discussion and agreement by means of the usual diplomatic channels.<sup>2</sup>

5. I thanked the Ambassador for his communication and said that there was one matter on which I should like to give a perfectly definite answer at once. His Majesty's Government entirely agreed that the next step would be to confer further with the French Government. Not only was this provided for in the last sentence of the joint communiqué but it was what we should in any case desire. I was due to be in Paris for a non-political engagement on the evening of Thursday, February 28th, and it might be that an Anglo-French conversation could be arranged in Paris that afternoon. We had not failed to observe that the German reply concentrates upon the proposal for an Air Convention between the Locarno Powers, while it makes only summary reference to other and essential parts of the Anglo-French communiqué. If an Anglo-German conversation shortly took place, we should not fail to insist on the necessity of dealing with the wider range of topics including armaments and security. M. Corbin said that there had been a meeting of French Ministers this morning at which they had agreed in opposing the conclusion of an air pact as a separate and self-contained

<sup>1</sup> See No. 400, Annex.

<sup>2</sup> A minute of February 20 by Mr. Creswell, a member of the Central Department, reads: "The French continue to beg the question, about the equality of levels in armaments—this time air armaments—see para. 4. It is a strangely illogical thesis."

instrument between Locarno Powers. I said that, nevertheless, the prospect of bringing Germany into equal consultation by the road of a discussion of the air project ought not to be missed. Germany had repeatedly expressed herself as in favour of bilateral as opposed to multilateral conversations, but any Anglo-German conversation, whatever form it takes, will have to be treated not as an end in itself but as a step towards a general meeting between Powers interested in the proposed general settlement. I added that while I thought it would be sanguine to expect great results from an Anglo-German meeting, there were reasons why it might be contemplated without serious disadvantage—on the one hand, we did not want Germany to exploit the complaint that bilateral meetings between others were constantly taking place, but she was treated in a different way; and, on the other hand, Anglo-French relations were so exceptionally good that not even Germany would suppose that a conversation in which she took part would bring about any Anglo-French differences.

6. The Ambassador asked whether I should be sending you further instructions before I go to Paris next week. I told him that this was my intention and that we should also have to communicate with Italy.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

**No. 472**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 20, 9.55 a.m.)*  
*No. 61 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1357/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, February 20, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

No trace of this suggestion appears in the German morning press nor will Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I feel convinced, put it forward.

Meanwhile should the idea be brought up in private conversation with myself or members of my staff we will of course strongly discourage it.

<sup>1</sup> No. 470.

**No. 473**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 20, 10.38 a.m.)*  
*No. 62 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1374/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, February 20, 1935

Today's 'Voelkischer Beobachter' reproduces extracts from the semi-official German 'Diplomatic-Political Correspondence' deploring tendency of section of French press to treat Air Convention as secondary rather than primary subject for negotiations, thus going against the clearly expressed



intention of the London communiqué. Similarly these newspapers were opposing all suggestions of procedure calculated to give Germany the position of a partner of equal rights with equal treatment.

Such jealousy was incomprehensible in Germany. If you were to visit Paris again next week this would be the third Anglo-French contact within a month. The French thus have no grounds for complaint. If an Anglo-German contact were to take place the French should welcome it as a step towards the settlement aimed at by London communiqué. Germany had worked hard in the cause of the European common weal; but tendencies still appear to exist aimed at the prevention of Germany's cooperation in the solution of the great international problems.

'D.A.Z.' welcomes the possibility of visit of 'a foreign personality provided with full powers'.

'Frankfurter Zeitung' warns against overlooking that part of 'semi-official' 'Times' statement referring to the necessity of postponing any visit until diplomatic negotiations have proceeded further.<sup>1</sup>

Other papers confine themselves to reproducing message from 'Times' correspondent explaining German opinion on this subject.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *The Times*, February 19, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> In a minute of February 20 Mr. Wigram wrote: 'There are 2 reasons why Hitler wants the British Ministers [to] come to Berlin (1) he wants to see them "go to Canossa" for purposes of German opinion, and (2) he thinks his wizardry is such that he will be able to divide Britain and France, just as he made Lord Lothian believe that Britain and Germany should "punish the world".' Cf. the note on Lord Lothian's interview with Herr Hitler on January 29, 1935 (see No. 391, note 3).

## No. 474

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 20, 5.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 17 Telegraphic [C 1392/55/18]*

MOSCOW, February 20, 1935, 5.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 14.<sup>1</sup>

In my conversation with Monsieur Litvinov yesterday I incidentally drew his attention to tone of Soviet press which in its displeasure with nature of German reply had developed a malignant attack upon England even implying that His Majesty's Government were encouraging Germany in her designs against Soviet Union. Recent articles, parts of which I quoted to him, had been not merely ludicrous and unfounded but also harmful.

Monsieur Litvinov while admitting that some comments were obviously exaggerated and foolish said it was not surprising that press men should run away with such ideas, as there had been many reports especially from German press of British opposition to an Eastern Pact and moreover there had been articles in the 'Times'<sup>2</sup> and other newspapers.

<sup>1</sup> No. 464.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. *The Times*, February 20, p. 15.

*Sir J. Simon to Viscount Chilston (Moscow)**No. 98 [C 1429/55/18]\**FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 20, 1935*

My Lord,

The Soviet Ambassador asked to see me to-day, and I asked Mr. Eden also to be present. M. Maisky handed to me a statement of the attitude of the Soviet Government towards the outcome of the Anglo-French conversations in London (attached).<sup>1</sup> The Ambassador read this statement, and I asked him to express to M. Litvinov and the Soviet Government my appreciation of the welcome extended by the Soviet Government to the joint communiqué issued after the meeting in London of the French and British Ministers.

2. The Ambassador then went on to speak at some length of the prospects of the Eastern Pact. He said that he was confident that there was in Berlin an impression that His Majesty's Government were lukewarm in their attitude towards the pact. If it were not for this measure of indirect encouragement the Ambassador felt sure that the German Government would not dare to maintain their intransigent attitude towards the pact. I replied that I felt sure that the Ambassador must be misinformed as to this. Our attitude had been made perfectly plain in the House of Commons last July<sup>2</sup> and we had at no time receded from the position then taken up with the approval of all parties and sections in the House. I found it hard to believe, therefore, that the Germans were in any doubt as to our sincerity in desiring that the pact should materialise. At the same time the Ambassador must appreciate that, since we were not ourselves potential signatories of the pact, there must be a limit to the amount of influence which we could effectually exercise.

3. M. Maisky rejoined that the statement in the House of Commons to which I had referred was made many months ago. In modern diplomacy past expressions of policy were apt soon to grow cold, and therefore the Ambassador would be grateful if His Majesty's Government could assist the prospects of the pact by taking two steps which he would venture to suggest: First, by renewing at Berlin and at Warsaw our representations urging both the Governments concerned to accede to the pact; secondly, by a statement in the House of Commons restating the attitude we had outlined last July. I replied that I would consider these suggestions, but that I could give no undertaking as to methods. Our attitude towards the pact had not changed, and the Ambassador must accept our assurance as to this. As to the best methods to encourage others to modify their attitude to the pact, these would have to be carefully considered. It was possible that there might be a personal meeting between British and German Ministers before long. Such a meeting might provide a useful opportunity. In the meanwhile, I urged M. Maisky to consider whether there were not some modifications of the Eastern Pact that

<sup>1</sup> Printed as enclosure to this document.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 454, note 1.

could be made which would help to obtain the accession of Germany and Poland to that instrument. After all, what we all wanted was agreement. If one party maintained that such-and-such an outline of the pact was an immutable document and the other persisted in refusing to accept this document, it was clear that the *impasse* would be complete. This must be avoided if possible. If the Soviet Government could consider what modifications they could make to their proposal without altering its fundamental character, these might make it easier of acceptance by Germany. For instance, I had heard the complaint that under the pact Germany might be called upon to invade Poland in the event of a dispute between Poland and Russia which culminated in a Polish attack upon Russia.

4. The Ambassador said that this was certainly so under the terms of the proposed pact, but he could not understand at all why Germany should object to such an arrangement. The essence of the pact was its mutual assistance—the fact that those assenting to it would be pledged to go to the aid of any one of its members who was attacked. Surely this was a contention to which nobody should take exception. It was difficult to resist the impression that Germany was hostile to the pact because she harboured the thought that one day she might wish to attack one of the countries in Eastern Europe.

5. I assured the Ambassador that I had not lost sight, and would not lose sight, of the significance of the Eastern Pact. If the conversations took place with the German Ministers, they would do so upon the whole field covered by the London communiqué. At the same time, the Ambassador would realise that public opinion in this country attached great importance to the question of disarmament. The ultimate objective of all these security arrangements was to give the confidence necessary to make an arms agreement possible. M. Maisky replied that, once the Eastern Pact was signed, the problem of armaments for the Soviet Government at least would constitute no difficulty. They would be found very ready to do their part. The Ambassador reiterated, however, in conclusion, his assertion that Berlin really was under the impression that we cared little for the fate of the Eastern Pact, and emphasised his hope that His Majesty's Government would take steps they considered best to remove any such impression.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

ENCLOSURE IN No. 475

*Memorandum communicated by the Soviet Ambassador*

*February 20, 1935*

In view of the request made by the British Government through the British Ambassador in Moscow, Lord Chilton, on the 19th February, to the Soviet Government to state their attitude towards the London Agreement,<sup>1</sup> I have the honour, on the instruction of my Government, to state the following:—

The Soviet Government welcomes the statement contained in the joint communiqué issued after the meeting in London of the French and British

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Nos. 465 and 469.

Ministers to the effect that this meeting 'had as its object to promote the peace of the world by closer European co-operation,' and 'to remove those tendencies which, if unchecked, are calculated to lead to a race in armaments and to increase the dangers of war.'

The Soviet Government has long ago come to the conclusion that, faced with the apparent impossibility of bringing about total disarmament, and the difficulties of controlling the limitation of armaments, the only means of counteracting the approaching real danger of a new military clash is a system of regional pacts securing mutual assistance between those countries which sincerely strive to prevent this danger. The Soviet Government has learned with satisfaction from the communiqué referred to above that the French and British Ministers have outlined a scheme of such pacts which are to ensure security of all the States of Europe, especially at its most vulnerable points. It also considers as a step forward the recognition during the London meeting of the necessity, in cases provided for in the pacts, to render immediate assistance to the country which becomes the victim of attack. In the establishment of a single scheme embracing the various parts of Europe, the Soviet Government is inclined to see an acknowledgment of the fact that the maintenance of peace in all these parts is interdependent. This admission results from the impossibility, in the present circumstances, to localise a war which may break out at any point of Europe. It therefore considers that the object of the London meeting, viz., 'the organisation of security in Europe,' can only be achieved by the realisation of all the regional pacts and agreements mentioned in the London communiqué and that, on the other hand, the neglect of one or another of these agreements will not only not facilitate 'the reinforcement of the prospects of peace' but would rather be considered as an open encouragement to the violation of peace in the respective region.

The Soviet Government wishes to believe that this is also the conception of the authors of the official communiqué and that the regional pacts which have been under discussion between certain States prior to the London meeting will not only not be prejudiced, but will receive under the London Agreement fresh support.

After the London Agreement, it is possible to state that the idea of the necessity of adopting the speediest effective measures to counteract military aggression by means of pacts of mutual assistance is being actively supported by four of the largest States in Europe, viz., France, Great Britain, Italy and the U.S.S.R., as well as by the Little and Balkan *Ententes*, accounting in total for 365 million people, i.e., 70 per cent. of the population of Europe.

It is beyond doubt that the overwhelming majority of the remaining countries of Europe are favourably inclined towards anything that could be done for the purpose of enforcing peace, and that thus the existing 'tendencies to increase the dangers of war' are represented by a comparatively small number of adherents. In these circumstances, it is difficult to admit that such an overwhelming majority of European countries, being inspired by a single object and being united in their struggle for peace, should not be in a position

to realise the task of enforcing peace which it has set before itself, by those means which it came to consider as necessary and indispensable.

Welcoming the London Agreement on condition of its complete and indivisible materialisation in the spirit of the above-stated remarks, the Soviet Government hopes that it will be fully and resolutely carried out.

No. 476

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent (Received February 22)*  
[C 1444/55/18]

BERLIN, *February 20, 1935*

My dear Sargent,

On Newton's<sup>1</sup> return from leave recently he took the opportunity to discuss the various developments in the situation here with a high official in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The following is a summary of the more interesting points of the conversation.

Newton's informant confirmed the statement made in my telegram No. 53<sup>2</sup> of the 14th February, that the suggestion for preliminary Anglo-German conversations came from the Chancellor himself. In reply to a suggestion that this might be regarded in certain quarters as an attempt to drive a wedge between us and the French, the official, who seemed to appreciate this danger, said that there was of course no such intention. It was fully realised that any decisive discussions would have to take place between all the parties concerned, but just as preliminary conversations had taken place between us and the French, so it was hoped that preliminary conversations might similarly be held between us and the Germans. He also seemed to appreciate that, although it might be convenient and practical to deal first with the Air Convention, there might be objections to picking and choosing between the various items of the general programme.

Newton asked what was Germany's real objection to an Eastern Pact. He recalled that previously Germany had insisted that she could never be a party to an Eastern Locarno; but her main objection had since fallen to the ground, inasmuch as she had concluded an entente with Poland. Here the official interposed with the smiling but perhaps rather significant remark: 'Yes, for ten years'. Was the real objection now, Newton continued, that Germany did not wish, as the 'Times' had put it,<sup>3</sup> to be the nut between a pair of Franco-Russian nutcrackers? The reply was that this was only indirectly the reason; the direct reason, as was perhaps insufficiently appreciated in Germany itself, was that by multiplying the adherents to a pact of mutual assistance, the danger of conflict was correspondingly multiplied. If, for example, Poland and Lithuania or Poland and Czechoslovakia were parties and got involved in hostilities, Germany would be *ipso facto* drawn in,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. B. C. Newton, Counsellor of H.M. Embassy, Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> No. 447.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Times*, February 13, p. 12.

even though it might be altogether against her intentions. Such a prospect would be uninviting, even if Germany were very strong; in her present weak state it could not be contemplated at all. Newton had the impression that, while a pact of mutual assistance would be out of the question for Germany, a pact of mutual consultation might possibly be considered. Ribbentrop, whom he tried to draw on the subject on a subsequent informal occasion, was, however, very blank, saying that anything involving commitments with Russia would be difficult for the Chancellor to stomach.

Herr Rosenberg's<sup>4</sup> influence on foreign politics is, according to the official at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, no longer great and is diminishing. (On the other hand, Monsieur François-Poncet told me the opposite. He hears Rosenberg was partly responsible (with Ribbentrop) for the paragraph in the German reply regarding separate talks with us.) Newton's informant, however, believed that while Rosenberg's ideas on certain matters, e.g. Russia, may still influence the Chancellor, generally speaking his chief sphere now is that of education (*weltanschauliche Erziehung*) for the Party.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand Ribbentrop probably has a good deal of influence. While Herr von Neurath sees the Chancellor perhaps once or twice a day—or of course more if necessary—it is to discuss specific questions and perhaps to submit documents which the Chancellor, like statesmen sometimes in other countries, finds it rather a bore to read. On the other hand Ribbentrop sits in the same building and is always available for a chat if the Chancellor wishes to indulge in a general talk on foreign affairs. Ribbentrop is no doubt a sympathetic listener and his knowledge of foreign countries may seem to the Chancellor to fill gaps in his own experience. Newton gathered that the Chancellor often has tea with Ribbentrop, and in the course of their discussions the latter has exceptional opportunities of putting forward any ideas of his own. Newton's informant said, however, that relations between him and the Ministry were quite good and that they found him a help rather than a hindrance. It would, however, be easier for the Ministry to know where they were if he had some better-defined official position, e.g. as a Cabinet Minister or as an Ambassador. These remarks must, I think, be taken with a grain of salt as the official in question is a relative of Ribbentrop.

As regards the famous meeting in the Opera House,<sup>6</sup> the official confirmed the account which we have already given, but had nothing new to add. While the meeting which did take place at the Opera House was a complete surprise, it was also rather a surprise that the Reichstag meeting expected on the 30th January did not take place. A speech might, however, the official thought, be made in the Reichstag or elsewhere on the 1st March in connexion with the Saar celebrations. (This possibility was reported in my des-

<sup>4</sup> Herr A. Rosenberg had been head of the Foreign Affairs Office of the National Socialist party since April 1933. He was a leading exponent of plans for Germany's expansion into East and South-East Europe.

<sup>5</sup> Since January 1934 Herr Rosenberg had been Commissioner for Supervising the Ideological Education of the Nazi movement.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Nos. 314 and 315.

patch No. 1147 of the 2nd February). If so, it was certain that nothing would be said which might prejudice Franco-German relations. Ribbentrop, whom Newton has subsequently met at dinner, said, however, that he knew nothing as yet of any intention by the Chancellor to make any important pronouncement on the 1st March.

Yours ever,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>7</sup> Received February 7, not printed.

**No. 477**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*  
*No. 39 Telegraphic [C 1430/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 21, 1935, 1.30 p.m.*

1. The German Government's reply of February 14th<sup>1</sup> to the Anglo-French communiqué of February 3rd welcomes the evidence of friendly confidence animating the discussions which have already taken place for promoting peace and security and acknowledges the spirit of free agreement between sovereign States which is invoked by the communiqué. The reply goes on to suggest that the bilateral conversations which have already taken place in London should now be followed by an Anglo-German conversation.

2. His Majesty's Government are not opposed in principle to this suggestion and appreciate that it naturally flows out of meetings of a preliminary character which have already been held between other pairs of Powers.

3. Before such an Anglo-German conversation can actually take place it is essential to establish clearly by mutual agreement its purpose and scope. As to this we are confident that there will be no disagreement between the German Government and ourselves, but it is better to make it clear and to ask for confirmation. The object of such a meeting would be to carry consultation a stage further on all the matters referred to in the Anglo-French communiqué. It would not be the object of such a meeting to isolate one topic to the exclusion of others but to have an exchange of views on the totality of matters there referred to.

4. We gather from the German Government's reply that they too have in mind a preliminary discussion over a wide range, and we agree with them in thinking that the time has come when this would be useful. I should be glad to learn without delay whether they concur in the above description of the purpose and scope of the meeting and we can then take up at once questions of time and place.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 446.

No. 478

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 21, 5 p.m.)  
No. 18 Telegraphic [C 1431/55/18]*

MOSCOW, February 21, 1935, 5.27 p.m.

Your telegram No. 32 to Paris.<sup>1</sup>

Russia already having non-aggression pacts with Poland and all the Baltic States and practically with Germany it would indeed at first sight seem that such a network of pacts ought to suffice Russia for her security, her main object being to ensure neutrality of all neighbours in the West in case of an attack in the East. But the intense and growing suspicion of Germany made Litvinov feel that those agreements were insufficient guarantees of Russia's security. In fact he evidently had no confidence in mere non-aggression pacts even with his definition of aggressor; and he has constantly asserted that pacts are not good without 'mutual assistance.'

In the Eastern Pact it is of course the second act<sup>2</sup> (agreement between France and Russia) which is the all important one to Russia. In fact the whole pact in its earliest form looked like a mere facade for a Franco-Soviet alliance. I think Litvinov clings, above everything, to 'immediate assistance' of France; and unless this were assured I did not think he would be satisfied by any alternative scheme. But if a system of guarantees imposed upon bilateral pacts were to provide for such assistance I do not see why Russia should not be satisfied.

Incidentally the term (in Eastern pact proposal) 'immediate assistance' leads one to suppose that the pact was intended to be based on Soviet definition of aggressor.

With regard to Baltic States I expect Litvinov would want all of them to be included and probably also Czechoslovakia.

Repeated to Berlin, Paris, and Warsaw.

<sup>1</sup> No. 468.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. section II of the proposed pact of July 1934; see Volume VI, No. 492.

No. 479

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)  
No. 40 Telegraphic [C 1430/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 21, 1935, 5.30 p.m.

*Immediate and Confidential*

1. My immediately preceding telegram<sup>1</sup> furnishes you with the views of His Majesty's Government on the German Government's proposal for an Anglo-German conversation. Please make a verbal communication to them on these lines immediately. It would be a considerable convenience to have

<sup>1</sup> No. 477.



their answer without delay for the British press is taking much interest in the subject and I am likely to be questioned on Monday.<sup>2</sup>

2. For your own information. Our view that we should accept the German suggestion is not based on any unduly sanguine hopes of a favourable result but largely on the considerations set out in my next paragraph. I quite realise that there is a danger of encouraging German *intransigence* yet further,<sup>3</sup> but the following arguments have much force.

3. In the first place the London communiqué insists on free and equal negotiation and has impressed everybody, even the Germans, with its fair and friendly tone. There have already been bilateral meetings in Rome, Paris and London between representatives of pairs of Powers and a bilateral meeting in which Germany takes part is a natural corollary. Moreover, our own relations with both Paris and Rome are so good that we ought to be able to carry this new step through without losing influence elsewhere. And there is the additional reason from the point of view of our domestic politics that if the new effort represented by the London conversations ultimately failed and there had been no direct personal contact with Germany, the absence of this contact would be widely regarded as contributing to the disappointment. You have had a good deal of trouble from unofficial missionaries to Berlin<sup>4</sup> and more authoritative contact may have its advantage. I am fully alive to the risk which is always run if an effort of this sort does not produce positive results, but it will be important to make clear beforehand in both countries that the meeting is in the nature of a preliminary exploration over a wide field.

4. I am going to Paris on Thursday of next week<sup>5</sup> to fulfil a long-standing engagement to lecture on the British Constitution. It may be that I shall see M. Laval that day and reassure him as to the purpose and scope of any Anglo-German meeting. I am returning from Paris to London next morning, March 1st. I will await your answer before discussing dates and other details of an Anglo-German meeting. It is evident that the German Government would like it to take place in Berlin and if it takes place at all I think this is probably the right place, as it is only in Germany that Hitler can be seen.

<sup>2</sup> February 25.

<sup>3</sup> In the first draft of this telegram the words 'if indeed that is possible' followed here.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Nos. 391 and 440.

<sup>5</sup> February 28.

#### No. 480

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*<sup>1</sup>

*No. 37 Telegraphic [C 1430/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 21, 1935, 6.15 p.m.*

Please inform M. Laval of the substance of the communication we are making confidentially to the German Government as set out in my telegram

<sup>1</sup> A similarly worded telegram, No. 118 of even date, was sent, *mutatis mutandis*, to Sir E. Drummond for communication to Signor Mussolini.

No. 39 to Berlin<sup>2</sup> of to-day's date and use at your discretion the reasoning contained in my telegram No. 40 to Berlin.<sup>3</sup> I shall not fail to inform M. Laval of the answer we may receive from the German Government.

2. Our relations with the French Government are so close and friendly that I do not doubt that the course we propose to follow will receive their confidence and, I hope, their positive concurrence. I should greatly welcome the expression of their approval.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> No. 477.

<sup>3</sup> No. 479.

<sup>4</sup> This telegram was repeated to Berlin, Brussels, and Moscow.

### No. 481

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 21, 6.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 65 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1517/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, February 21, 1935

Your telegram No. 39.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs will receive me at 11.30 tomorrow morning but meanwhile there has again been a leakage in London for German correspondents there have telegraphed gist of third and fourth paragraphs of your telegram.<sup>2</sup> Officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have consequently been discussing question with 'Times' correspondent and have told him that scope of Anglo-German conversations will be unlimited.

<sup>1</sup> No. 477.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Wigram remarked on February 25: 'I don't think this "leakage" much matters.'

### No. 482

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 22, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 30 Telegraphic [C 1438/55/18]*

PARIS, February 21, 1935, 10.25 p.m.

Your telegram No. 32.<sup>1</sup>

I had yesterday preliminary exchange of views with Political Director whom I knew to be supervising researches which Ministry of Foreign Affairs are engaged upon with the view to modifying Eastern pact so as to make it less unpalatable to Germany. The scheme on which he is working and of which he had already given me privately some idea is as follows: Basing himself on passages in memorandum of September 8th<sup>2</sup> in which German government indicated that notwithstanding their preference in general for bilateral agreements they do not exclude idea of multilateral agreements if limited to non-aggression and consultation, Monsieur Bargeton's idea is to

<sup>1</sup> No. 468.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 85, note 1.

eliminate provision of mutual assistance as a general obligation and to confine Eastern Pact to a general reciprocal undertaking of non-aggression and consultation accompanied however by a provision, similar to that contained in Danubian Pact, permitting signatories to conclude facultative engagements amongst themselves to meet the case of a breach of obligation assumed under the parent instrument.

This would enable France, in the case of default of a general mutual assistance engagement, to conclude an arrangement with Russia, with or without others, which would be free from taint of a pre-war alliance in as much as it would be permanently open to participation of other states including Germany herself. It is thought that Germany if exempted from an obligation from which she recoils could have no possible justification for objecting to others assuming it amongst themselves since it would be purely defensive in character, would be directed against *any* theoretical disturber of the peace and therefore against no one in particular, and would be open to the participation at any time of any state which wished to share in the benefits as well as obligations of mutual help.

Advantages of this arrangement, Monsieur Bargeton claimed, were its simplicity and the fact that it assimilated Eastern Pact to Danube Pact and would thus bring greater part of Europe under one system.

I then gave Monsieur Bargeton privately a little sketch of the scheme outlined in your telegram under reference explaining that it was fruit of the work which had been carried out in the Foreign Office with view of helping the Ministry here in any way possible in researches which it was hoped they were pursuing. I hoped he would examine it carefully to see whether it contained any ideas which he could usefully borrow. He promised to do this and we agreed to resume discussion shortly.

As I gather that departmental researches had not yet received any kind of ministerial blessing I went on to see Monsieur Laval to whom I said whether or not there was any chance of persuading Germany to collaborate in organisation of security in the East it was beyond any manner of doubt that she would not accept Eastern Pact in its present form. I hoped he would see to it that his department applied their ingenuity to finding some modification which whilst giving France and her allies substance of what they required would remove Germany's objections for some of which at least there was a measure of justification. In pursuing our joint efforts to secure a general settlement we must avoid asking anything of Germany which was unreasonable and requirement that she should join Eastern Pact in its present form was undoubtedly a weakness in our case.

Monsieur Laval said he would do as I asked. At one moment during the conversation he told me that he had been thinking of sending for German Ambassador and pressing him to obtain a definite answer from Berlin on this point. I begged him not to do anything of the sort at this stage but rather to concentrate on finding a modification of original proposal such as would facilitate German acceptance. His Excellency agreed.

Repeated to Moscow, Warsaw, Berlin, Rome and Brussels.

*Memorandum on the Proposed Aerial Convention*

[C 1437/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 21, 1935*

*Comments by the Foreign Office on the Report by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee (1161-B) and on the Memorandum by the Secretary to the Cabinet and Committee of Imperial Defence (1162-B).*<sup>1</sup>

The Chiefs of Staff and Sir M. Hankey have circulated to the Committee of Imperial Defence two papers containing their respective views on the proposed Aerial Convention. It is desired, first, to make certain observations of a general nature on those papers.

2. This question must be considered on the basis of the existence of the Treaty of Locarno. Some of the most important arguments in Sir Maurice Hankey's paper (and the same is true to some extent of the Chiefs of Staff report) are just as applicable to Locarno as they are to the proposed Air Convention. But Locarno exists, and at intervals we repeat our intention of complying with our obligations under it; and if the hypothesis with which the proposed Convention would deal (a sudden air attack by one Party to Locarno upon another in circumstances involving a violation of the first Party's Locarno undertakings) were to occur, we should be bound, under our existing Locarno commitments, to come to the assistance of the victim, unless we elect to fail to honour our undertakings, with all the consequences which would ensue. It is suggested therefore that the main questions which have to be considered are two: (1) Would the conclusion of the proposed Convention make it more or less likely that we should be called upon to honour our Locarno commitments; (2) Would the proposed Convention involve any increase in those commitments?

3. As to (1), the circumstance which is most likely to result in our being called upon to honour our Locarno guarantee is uncertainty as to whether we should, in fact, do so; here the precedent of 1914 is surely pertinent. It follows that action (such as the conclusion of the proposed Convention) which would indicate to a potential Locarno-breaker that he will have to reckon with us is likely, provided we are adequately armed, to operate as a powerful deterrent. If it is definitely known that in one case at least we should throw our weight into the scales at once, the chance of this case occurring is lessened. To establish publicly that an aggressor by air would have to meet the air forces of a combination of other Powers concerned must surely reduce the risk of an aggression taking place. If this is sound, always provided we are adequately armed, the proposed Convention should further diminish the possibility of our having to act under the existing Locarno commitments, and if so, it should be welcomed by those who dislike those commitments.

<sup>1</sup> Committee of Imperial Defence papers 1161-B and 1162-B, of February 8 and 14, 1935, respectively, are not printed.

4. As to (2), it is argued in paragraphs 6 to 9 in the Chiefs of Staff report, and also in Sir Maurice Hankey's paper, that the proposed convention would involve a definite extension of Locarno. The true view, however, will, it is suggested, be found in paragraph 10 of the Chiefs of Staff Report, where it is stated that 'in actual practice aggression that brings the air forces into operation under the proposed pact will inevitably bring the provisions of the Locarno Treaty into operation.' A serious and unprovoked air attack by Germany upon France would certainly constitute a 'flagrant violation' of Article 2 of Locarno and an 'unprovoked act of aggression' within the meaning of Article 4 (3), which would bring our undertaking 'immediately to come to the help' of France into operation. The only possible addition which the proposed Convention would make to Locarno on this point is that, in the circumstances postulated, we should be bound to hold that 'immediate action' was necessary, and there could hardly be any doubt about that.

5. The Chiefs of Staff argue in paragraph 7 of the Chiefs of Staff report that the Convention would differ from the Treaty of Locarno in that it would not place 'the responsibility for the final decision to enter the war on each country concerned.' In the view of the Foreign Office, this is not a sound argument. In every case of undertakings for mutual guarantees somebody has got to decide whether the *casus fœderis* has arisen, and unless the point is referred to some external authority, the decision must be taken by the country whose guarantee is invoked. In order that our guarantee should come into operation, there must be an act of aggression which is unprovoked. The phrase 'unprovoked aggression' is in the Locarno Treaty, and so is the phrase 'undertakes immediately to come to the help of the party against whom such a violation or breach has been directed,' but the question whether 'unprovoked aggression' has taken place remains as before a question for us to decide for ourselves. If we were to imagine a faked dropping of a bomb, we should not be automatically drawn in, but should declare that we were not satisfied that 'aggression' had taken place. And in the same way, it would remain for us to decide whether the attack is 'unprovoked.' The novelty in the new pact is not that we are the victims of blind chance, but that if we are satisfied that there is an unprovoked aggression by air we should announce that we will act *at once by air*. A genuine case of unprovoked aggression by air upon a French town must surely bring into immediate operation our Locarno obligations already, and every competent jurist holds that the reference to 'forces' in the Treaty of Locarno necessarily covers air forces.

6. It is a mistake to describe the suggested air pact for cases already covered by the Locarno Treaty as 'an almost identical proposal' with that considered by the Cabinet last May. There is surely all the difference in the world between agreeing that the British air force shall be used if, for example, Poland attacks Russia or Bulgaria attacks Greece, and an agreement which, whatever its merits or demerits, does not extend our existing obligations to any class of case not covered by Locarno. It was precisely because the scope of the May proposal would have involved extensive new commitments which would not be 'acceptable to public opinion in this country' that the proposal

of May was not pursued. It is not, therefore, necessary to discuss at greater length the objection to which Sir Maurice Hankey gives first place in his paper.

7. We may now consider in detail the disadvantages of the Convention as stated by Sir M. Hankey and the Chiefs of Staff. For the sake of convenience the point of view of Sir M. Hankey and the Chiefs of Staff on the one hand, and of the Foreign Office on the other, are set out below in parallel columns:—

*Sir M. Hankey and Chiefs of Staff*

(1) Britain will be committed to take air action—and will be plunged in war with all her forces—without the safeguard contained in paragraph 3 of Article 4 of the Locarno Treaty, which provides that a guarantor Power will come to the aid of a guaranteed Power only when it is satisfied that immediate action is necessary as the result of an unprovoked act of aggression. The bombing attack will be delivered and it will be impossible to determine if the attack was unprovoked. (Paragraph 19 of Chiefs of Staff report and Sections VIII and IX of Sir Maurice Hankey's memorandum.)

(2) Britain may be involved in war as a result of the commitments in other parts of Europe of other signatories to the Convention. (Paragraph 19 of Chiefs of Staff report.)

(3) Britain is less likely than France to have to face single-handed air attack by Germany. (Paragraph 19 of Chiefs of Staff report.)

(4) The Convention involves military preparedness, which Locarno did not involve. (Paragraph 8 of Sir Maurice Hankey's memorandum.)

*Foreign Office*

(1) The test of the operation of the guarantee under the Convention, as under the Locarno treaty, will be not an alleged isolated bomb, but events which satisfy this country that 'unprovoked aggression by air' had actually taken place. If Brest or Nancy or Chatham or Harwich were destroyed or seriously damaged, the seriousness of the aggression would be a matter of common knowledge. (See also paragraphs 4 and 5 above.)

(2) This point is really a question of drafting. It was dealt with in the Locarno Treaty and it can be dealt with again. The position will in fact be precisely the same as it already is under Locarno.

(3) This may be the case; but the fact remains that, as in 1914, we could not allow France to be overwhelmed so long as there was any danger that we should ultimately ourselves be left to face Germany single-handed.

(4) It is the European situation and not any Convention of any kind which involves increased military preparedness, as matters now stand. Moreover, Locarno was never really open to any such interpretation. That interpretation may have been put upon it for reasons of home con-

venience, and owing to the circumstances of the time, which were not such as to lead to the supposition that it might be necessary to implement it in any immediate future. With the rearmament of Germany one of the most important factors which has weakened Locarno abroad has been our known inability to live up to it. Our military preparedness, whether under Locarno or the Air Convention, must be in proportion to the growing strength of Germany, which, at the moment, is the only real danger to us in Europe. The reason that we allowed our armaments to fall between 1925 and 1933 was not, as Sir M. Hankey states, because 'Locarno was a peace convention rather than a war convention,' but because there was no potential aggression (*cf.* replacement of ten-year rule), and because it was found politically convenient to spend the money otherwise.

(5) Locarno did not produce the peace results expected, and therefore should not be supplemented (paragraphs 9-11 of Sir M. Hankey's memorandum.)

(5) Locarno did not produce the results expected because of the growing dissatisfaction of Germany with the treaty settlement and the consequently increasing conviction that she intended to change it, if necessary, unilaterally or even by force of arms. The attitude of Germany in its turn produced the French attitude to disarmament. It is arguable that the German determination to flout the Treaty of Versailles was, in part, encouraged by our own notoriously inadequate armaments and the apparent uncertainty of our own policy. No proper estimate of these psychological factors can be reached save by combining our own point of view with seeing ourselves as others see us. Even if Locarno has not fulfilled

(6) Since the demilitarisation of the Rhineland, guaranteed by Locarno, is about to be violated with impunity, we ought not to enter on a new and much more onerous commitment of the same kind, which points and sharpens all those aspects of Locarno that are most unpopular. (Paragraphs 12 to 14 of Sir M. Hankey's memorandum.)

(7) It is doubtful if any democratic country can be counted on for long to honour such an engagement as the Air Convention: this view is supported by historical reference. (Section IV of Sir M. Hankey's memorandum.)

expectations this is no reason for abandoning this further attempt to give effect to the collective peace system in Europe which we always advocate as being the only alternative to a return to the pre-war system of balance of power and competition in armaments.

(6) The proposed air convention does not apply to the demilitarised zone. Indeed one of its merits may be that it emphasises how much more serious we consider an attack on France or Belgium than a disregard of the Locarno provisions about the demilitarised zone. Far from pointing and sharpening those aspects of Locarno which may be thought to be unpopular (by which is presumably meant the guaranteeing of France and Belgium), the proposed air convention, for the first time, makes a definite contribution towards guaranteeing British security as distinct from French and Belgian security. It is difficult to suppose that this will be unpopular in this country.

(7) Leaving aside the criticism upon democracy, paragraph 16 of this section of Sir M. Hankey's paper points out that nations will not go to war, under modern conditions, except for some overpowering motive such as security or national ambition, in other words, for some vital interest. But surely thinking opinion in France is well aware that the integrity of Britain is for France a vital interest; and no French Government could ignore that fact. Whilst commenting on French unreliability, giving a number of instances of it and observing that 'a British guarantee is probably worth more than a French or Italian,' though France is also a



democratic country and Italy is the reverse, is it consistent to state that 'British public opinion could not be induced to allow the Government to give effect to the flagrant aggression clause of the Locarno Treaty'?

Are the chief historical instances quoted in this section altogether relevant to the circumstances now in question? These cases could be argued at length, but would occupy overmuch space. In any case they could and would be countered by similar accusations against us.

(8) The signatories to the Convention, owing to their commitments or difficulties elsewhere, might not be in a position to honour it. (Section V of Sir M. Hankey's memorandum.)

(8) Is not this argument something of a truism? But despite Sir M. Hankey's statement that 'the probability is that Germany will never attack France, England or Belgium in normal times,' it was precisely such times which she chose for the attack of 1914.

(9) The cause of the dispute which would render the Convention operative might not be such as to appeal to the co-signatories, whose help would therefore not be forthcoming. Sir M. Hankey quotes in particular a colonial dispute. (Section VI of Sir M. Hankey's memorandum.)

(9) France is also an inheritor of German colonies. Moreover a colonial dispute in which we were concerned would, if it led to war, inevitably extend in its consequences to the European theatre where interests vital for France would at once be engaged.

(10) The mutual nature of the guarantees provided by the Convention is such as to render it impossible of operation, because we cannot make plans with both France and Germany. (Section VII of Sir M. Hankey's memorandum.)

(10) The answer is that such a question must be considered in a spirit of realism, and the reality is that the circumstances in which we should have to join Germany against France and Belgium are inconceivable.

As regards Sir M. Hankey's suggestion (paragraph 29) that France and Germany will make plans against the United Kingdom, it does not appear probable that the French will study and elaborate the means of knocking out their one support.

(11) The Convention will be unpopular in the Dominions, who will

(11) The Convention is not a new commitment. The integrity of

*Sir M. Hankey and Chiefs of Staff*

be apt to believe it a new commitment. (Section XI of Sir M. Hankey's memorandum.)

*Foreign Office*

Belgium and France is for us a vital interest, which at need we have long defended by force of arms. It is that interest which is the commitment, not the paper or treaty by which it is recognized. The Dominions recognize, as in the case of Locarno, that we are entitled, indeed obliged, to protect ourselves. Were this not the case, the outlook for the Empire would be black indeed.

It is hoped that the above paragraphs will show that approval of the scheme is not due, as Sir M. Hankey supposes, to 'shock tactics,' but that it has been seriously considered and can be justified on merits.

8. In conclusion, the Foreign Office view of the advantages of the Convention may be stated. They seem to be as follows:—

- (i) The clear indication to Germany of a vital British interest which—whether the commitment represented be written or unwritten—is constituted by the maintenance of the integrity of Belgium and France.
- (ii) The equally clear indication which, unlike the Locarno Treaty, the Convention contains that the integrity of Britain is a vital interest to France.
- (iii) The deterrent which it should in these circumstances provide against aggression by Germany, on the assumption that adequate armaments are maintained by France and ourselves.
- (iv) The fact that the Convention would constitute the first constructive and explicit effort to deal with the misuse of a new and hitherto unknown weapon of war, *i.e.*, sudden and overwhelming and wholesale aerial bombardment.
- (v) The stabilising influence which the facts mentioned in (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) above may be expected to exercise throughout Europe.

9. There remain two questions, that of the simultaneity of the conclusion of the Air Convention and of the general settlement (Sir M. Hankey's Memorandum, Section X, and Chiefs of Staff report, paragraph 20); and that of the possibility of a Defensive Alliance (Chiefs of Staff report, paragraphs 21 and 22).

On the question of simultaneity, the Foreign Office is in agreement with Sir M. Hankey and the Chiefs of Staff.

10. The Foreign Office note the view of the Chiefs of Staff that from a military point of view—using military in its widest sense—a defensive alliance with France (and Belgium) would give us the added security which the Convention is designed to produce without some of its apparent disadvantages.

Is it clear that from other points of view the Defensive Alliance would not be open to the objections urged against the Convention? In any case, it is doubtful if British public opinion is yet ripe for such a proposal.

J. S.

No. 484

*Memorandum by Sir R. Vansittart*<sup>1</sup>

[N 880/135/38]

*Confidential*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 21, 1935

*International Position of the Soviet Union in relation to France, Germany, and Japan.*

The following memorandum summarises my views on the present international position of the Soviet Union, with special reference to its relations with Germany and Japan, to the Rome and London agreements, and to the proposed Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee.

2. The Soviet Government consider at present that they have in the world only two enemies of real political importance, Japan and Germany. Rightly or wrongly they fear an attack by either or both of these enemies, and so long as that fear continues to dominate their policy they will be whole-hearted supporters of the present territorial *status quo* in Europe and in Asia, and anxious to adopt any measures which might protect and perpetuate it. This is the policy which M. Litvinov has vigorously pursued for the past two years by concluding pacts of non-aggression with all the European neighbours of Russia, by his *rapprochement* with France and this country, and by the entry of the Soviet Union into the League of Nations.

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was prepared on Sir R. Vansittart's instructions of February 7 (cf. No. 373, note 1). The first draft, which is dated February 12, was drawn up by Mr. Collier, Mr. Wigram, and Mr. Orde as an agreed statement of the views of the Northern, Central, and Far Eastern Departments. In a minute of February 20 Mr. Sargent said that he did not entirely agree with the views expressed in the memorandum. 'In my opinion it exaggerates the danger of a Russo-German entente and under-estimates the disadvantages and dangerous repercussions of a Franco-Russian alliance', which would 'rightly or wrongly, be considered by a large part of public opinion as an attempt to encircle Germany'. This statement followed a meeting on February 19 at which various amendments had been made to the original draft in the hope of producing an agreed memorandum. On February 20 Mr. Collier also dissented: he said that he had allowed himself to be over-persuaded and could not sign the memorandum in its revised form. He added that he had never liked the system of 'agreed memoranda' practised in the Central Department, and thought that 'Vansittart—and, when necessary, the Secretary of State himself—ought to be in possession of the real, individual views of his subordinates'. The gist of his argument was as follows. 'I could not honestly say that I believed any large body of public opinion here cared two hoots about the so-called encirclement of Germany; nor could I say that a Russo-French understanding would bring a German-Japanese or German-Italian alliance appreciably nearer than they are already; and, in general, I could not sign something which implied, as the revised draft seems to imply, that a Russo-French understanding was an undesirable thing in itself.' On Vansittart's instructions (February 20) the concluding paragraphs of the draft were greatly abbreviated and discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of a Franco-Russian alliance deleted. He then signed the memorandum himself, remarking that he would 'prefer not to put conflicting memoranda before the S. of S. or the Cabinet'.

3. There is no reason, however, for this policy to continue once the fear which causes it disappears; and it would seem that it is in the power of Germany or of Japan to remove that fear at any time, as far as they are concerned. In the case of Japan it is perhaps unlikely that she would forgo her ambitions in China and Mongolia, or discard the fears inspired by Russia's strategic position, to the extent necessary to produce a real *détente* with the Soviet Government; but it is not impossible that the latter, if really hard-pressed in Europe, would completely throw in their hand in the Far East, and allow the Japanese a free field in those regions in return for a guarantee of the security of their own territory—which, of course, is not a situation that we would wish to see brought about.

4. As regards Germany, the possibility of a *détente* with the Soviet Union cannot be neglected, in spite of Herr Hitler's anti-communist obsessions and the extent to which anti-communism is a fundamental tenet of the National-Socialist party. It is difficult to see what advantage Germany can hope to achieve in the long run by antagonism to Russia. With the present Soviet Union she has no common frontier, nor are there any German minorities on Soviet territory of sufficient size to make it possible to foresee a real German colonisation or political domination in European Russia, even if the Soviet régime were to collapse—an event now recognised as most unlikely. In these circumstances, any German expansion in Russia seems unlikely to be other than an expansion of the markets for German industrial products. A policy of political adventure in Russia, whatever its ultimate effects, would, for the time being, destroy the Russian market, which has been, and may yet be again, of vital importance for German industry; and the traditional policy of those sections of German opinion which seem now to be regaining influence, the army and the industrialists, has always—both before and since the war—been in favour of a German-Russian understanding, for economic as well as for political reasons. As regards Herr Hitler's personal views, it must be remembered that Signor Mussolini has been able to combine anti-communism in Italy with a policy of friendship with Soviet Russia, whilst Herr Hitler himself has only recently begun to be seriously influenced by the Reichswehr and industrial circles. On the Russian side there is understood to be a party at Moscow which would be prepared to bring about a *détente* in Soviet-German relations for the sake of a free hand elsewhere. It is believed to be headed by Voroshilov, the Commissar for War, and to be looking for any and every excuse to 'trip up' M. Litvinov; and the main reasons for its lack of success hitherto have been the fanatical anti-Russian attitude of the Nazi Party and of Herr Hitler himself, and the schemes of Herr Rosenberg, which have long been regarded as fantastic by instructed opinion outside Germany, and seem now to be losing favour in Germany itself. In short, there are already indications that both in Germany and in Russia there is a growing volume of opinion which believes that common sense and the lessons of past history argue that Germany cannot afford an enemy west *and* east, and that Russia cannot afford an enemy east *and* west.

5. The conditions which might work in favour of the reconciliation of Russia and Germany have, paradoxically enough, been strengthened by the possibility of greater stability in the south and the west of Europe resulting from the Rome and London conversations. M. Litvinov, from the beginning of the Soviet *rapprochement* with France and this country, has endeavoured, very naturally, to use it as a means for increasing the security of his country's European frontiers. His first method of securing this end was the proposal for the conclusion of an open alliance with France: and, as M. Barthou told us last summer, it was the French Government who persuaded him to content himself instead with the proposed Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee, which we agreed to support. Under this pact, France, as well as Russia, would secure a guarantee against Germany and each would guarantee Germany against the other. M. Litvinov has argued that, so long as France is not satisfied with her position as against Germany in other parts of Europe, she will, in her own interest, put forward every effort to support the pact. It is clear, however, that whenever he thinks that France is about to receive satisfaction from Italy and Britain as regards her security, he becomes afraid that she will be less scrupulous as to maintaining the security existing in Eastern Europe and more inclined to accept an armaments settlement with Germany without insisting on that security. In fact, he is always afraid of the abandonment of the French effort to secure the proposed Eastern Pact, which—it is evident to all observers—has, in its present form, come up against what seems likely to be an insuperable German and Polish opposition.

6. It has, indeed, been suggested that the Soviet Government are really less concerned with the prospects of the Eastern Pact in itself than with its use as a means of preventing a general improvement in the relations between the other European Powers, which, they fear, might ultimately result in a 'capitalist' combination against them, or at any rate reduce in French eyes the present value of Russia as a guarantor of French security. The possibility of a reversal of the 'Litvinov policy', it is said, is therefore a mere bluff designed to prevent an improvement in Franco-German relations. Though it is probably true that the Soviet Government would prefer that Franco-German relations should not be improved at all, the whole history of their recent foreign policy can only be explained on the assumption that they are in the 'anti-revisionist bloc' because they want security, and for no other reason. If that security is denied them it will not be worth their while to continue their present friendships; but, on the other hand, they have no serious objection to improved relations between other Powers once that security is guaranteed. This is certainly the attitude of M. Litvinov, who would not otherwise have identified himself so closely with the Eastern Pact proposals as almost to stake his reputation on their success; and he has just confirmed to Lord Chilton (see the latter's telegram No. 11 of the 7th February)<sup>2</sup> that he welcomes the outcome of the London conversations provided the Eastern Pact is an integral part of any settlement which results from them.

<sup>2</sup> No. 427.

7. M. Litvinov, however, is now faced with the prospect of a complete and public fiasco in a matter on which, as already stated, he has to some extent staked his reputation; and there are already indications that those in power at Moscow are beginning to wonder whether they did not after all back the wrong horse. We know that the French attach importance to satisfaction being given to Russia in this matter as part of a general settlement; and the question now arises whether there is not some alternative which we could suggest to the French in the place of the Eastern Pact. It seems incumbent upon us, in our own interest, to do what we can to help the French in this matter. For unless there is to be a real danger of a reversion of Soviet policy to its former revisionist bias—a bias which is, after all, more easily reconcilable with the tenets of communism than M. Litvinov's present policy—the French must find some alternative to the Eastern Pact or proceed to what will, in fact, be a direct Franco-Russian alliance.

8. It can hardly be maintained that the attitude of the Soviet Government is not of great importance to us. We have gained much, both directly and indirectly, through the recent change in that attitude; and we stand to lose heavily if it is changed in the reverse direction. Directly, we have gained by the increase in our trade which has followed the Anglo-Soviet Agreement,<sup>3</sup> by the cessation of Soviet pressure on Afghanistan, and the comparative consideration for our interests which the Soviet Government have shown elsewhere in Asia (for example, their desire to stand well with us has probably been a main factor in deterring them from detaching Chinese Turkestan from China as completely as Mongolia, which they could easily have done at any time in the past year), and by the diminution in anti-British propaganda which is now becoming apparent. Indirectly, we have gained perhaps even more through the effect in Europe of the general realisation of the fact that the Soviet Government are now seeking the friendship of those Powers which are opposed to any change in the *status quo*. Even if there were no Soviet *rapprochement* with Germany or Japan, the return of the Soviet Government to their previous attitude of hostility to all 'capitalist' Powers would produce a situation from which our interests—particularly in the Middle East—would probably be the first to suffer, and in which the forces now restraining German and Japanese ambitions would be seriously weakened.

9. On the other hand, the German and Polish objections to the proposed Eastern Pact in the form presented last July seem insuperable. They are ostensibly based mainly upon the fact that it is a pact of general mutual assistance, and, as stated in Foreign Office telegram No. 21 to Paris,<sup>4</sup> it is not clear that they are groundless.

10. Is there then any alternative to the Eastern Pact in its present form of a general guarantee of mutual assistance? At first sight it might seem possible to build up something on the basis of the non-aggression arrangements already

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the temporary Anglo-Soviet Commercial Agreement signed on February 16, 1934, see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 137, pp. 188–94; cf. Volume VII, No. 572.

<sup>4</sup> No. 390.

in force in the east of Europe, and enquiries are being made in Paris on these lines (see telegram to Paris No. 32).<sup>5</sup>

11. If the French and Russian Governments agree to such a transformation of the Eastern Pact, and if Germany and Poland accept this new scheme, we will have achieved the object we have in view. We shall have given Russia the security which she requires and thereby confirmed her in her present policy of co-operation with the capitalist States of Western Europe on an anti-revisionist basis. On the other hand, we should have checked any occasion there might be for Russia, if disappointed in her pro-French policy, to encourage Germany to come to terms with her and establish a Russo-German combination, either economic or military.

12. It may, in fact, be said that in the coming negotiations His Majesty's Government will have to make special efforts if the present situation is to be consolidated, a situation in which Russia supports the aims of France and ourselves without a Franco-Russian alliance. If we can do so by persuading all the parties concerned to accept a modified form of the Eastern Pact, well and good. But we must face the fact that the prospects are not favourable, and if our efforts in this direction fail, the question of a direct Franco-Russian understanding will at once arise.

R. V.

<sup>5</sup> No. 468.

#### No. 485

*Letter to Viscount Chilston (Moscow) from Sir R. Vansittart*

[C 1339/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 21, 1935*

My dear Akers,

I think you may find a summary of my own views, and of the situation as I see it, useful for your own information and guidance at this juncture.

I am sending you by this bag a copy of a memorandum<sup>1</sup> prepared in the Foreign Office on the general position of Russia in Europe and her attitude to the present armaments and security negotiations, the London Communiqué and the Rome Agreement, and the proposed Eastern Pact.

Though this memorandum will make clear to you the importance which we attach to Russian cooperation in the negotiations which are now opening I think you will agree that it would not be wise to over estimate that aspect of the matter to the Soviet Government. We do not want to give them an exaggerated sense of their own importance or certainly to suggest to them that they can dictate our German policy to us.

On the other hand, as the memorandum shows, we are very conscious of the importance of Russia in the present situation and of not doing anything

<sup>1</sup> No. 484.

which might make her feel that we and France were going to leave her in the lurch and that therefore she had best make terms with Germany before it is too late.

We agreed to the insertion in the London Communiqué of February 3rd of the reference to the 'conclusion of pacts ensuring mutual assistance in eastern Europe'; and we entirely realise and admit that the conclusion of such a pact or pacts must be part of the general settlement. But as you will have seen from our telegrams Nos. 32<sup>2</sup> and 21 to Paris<sup>3</sup>, we think that it would be wise were the Soviet and French Governments to try to find some alternative to the July scheme of the Eastern Pact, as it evolved from the London meeting with Barthou last July, if only because, as pointed out in our telegram No. 21 to Paris,<sup>3</sup> continued insistence on the proposal in that particular shape may enable the Germans to put up an argument which will make an appeal to public opinion. Therefore we hope that the Soviet and French Governments will make a real effort to work out some alternative which, whilst equally satisfactory from the point of view of their security, will not enable the Germans to say that they have been asked to sign something which is unreasonable.

By the time this letter reaches Moscow you will, I hope, also have seen from the telegrams repeated to you that the Soviet Government need not think that we are going to yield to the German manoeuvre designed to secure the final conclusion of the Air Pact in advance of the conclusion or even development of the remainder of the negotiation. We shall not fall into this German trap, or at most go further than to initial with the other Powers concerned an Air Agreement, the entry into force of which will remain dependent on the rest of the negotiation, in parts of which the Soviet Government are so directly interested.

Moreover, I think I can say now for your own private and confidential information that we recognise that as the general negotiation proceeds it will become increasingly necessary that the Soviet Government should be directly represented in it; for their interests will be very immediately affected by any new agreement respecting German armaments as well as by the eastern security arrangements which I have already mentioned. I am personally much in favour of the idea of a visit by a British Minister to Moscow at some date within the next two or three months, if only to mark further the fact that it is no part of our policy to settle these big questions to the disregard of Russian interests.

I am sure that, with the aid of the telegrams which we are freely repeating to you, you are already trying to convince the Soviet Government that their interests are not being endangered by the discussions proceeding between London, Paris and Berlin, and that the agreement which we are seeking to bring about between France, Germany and ourselves is not being sought at the expense of the security of Russia. I notice particularly in your telegram No. 14<sup>4</sup> of the 18th February, that there is in Moscow some suspicion of our attitude and of the manner of the exercise of our influence in Berlin respect-

<sup>2</sup> No. 468.

<sup>3</sup> No. 390.

<sup>4</sup> No. 464.



ing the establishment of an adequate system of security in the East. I hope that you will lose no opportunity of explaining to the Soviet Government that they must not form their impression of H.M.G.'s policy either from the articles of people like Lothian,<sup>5</sup> or from the 'Times' leaders, of which on Feb. 20th there was a particularly egregious example. I have no opinion whatever of Lothian's views about Germany, or of the views of Kennedy,<sup>6</sup> the foreign leader writer of the 'Times'; I have already said this to Maisky, and I do not care who knows it. Indeed, it is most desirable that you should work for it to be clearly understood in Moscow that views of this kind are in no way those of H.M. Government.

Yours ever,  
R. VANSITTART

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 402, note 2.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. A. L. Kennedy.

**No. 486**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 22, 9.30 a.m.)  
No. 31 Telegraphic [C 1434/55/18]*

PARIS, February 22, 1935, 1.37 a.m.

Your telegram No. 37.<sup>1</sup>

I gave M. Laval who received me this evening<sup>2</sup> at 10 p.m. substance of your telegram No. 39<sup>3</sup> to Berlin accompanied by selected passages of your telegram No. 40<sup>4</sup> to Berlin. I then said that you hoped he would give you not only his confidence but his expressed approval of course which you are adopting.

2. After I had said in reply to his enquiry that I did not think there was any question of an Anglo-German conversation taking place before your visit to Paris next week, M. Laval begged me to tell you how much he appreciated the clear way in which you had set out in your message to German government the object and scope of suggested conversation, to assure you that he had fullest confidence in His Majesty's Government and particularly in yourself and that he gladly gave his approval.

Repeated to Berlin, Rome, Moscow and Brussels.

<sup>1</sup> No. 480.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. February 21.

<sup>3</sup> No. 477.

<sup>4</sup> No. 479.

No. 487

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 22, 12.20 p.m.)*  
*No. 66 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1463/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, February 22, 1935

I read to Baron von Neurath your telegram to me No. 39<sup>1</sup> and His Excellency entirely concurs in your description of purpose and scope of proposed Anglo-German meeting. He added that both he and German government would be very pleased to welcome you in Berlin. He remarked that chief reason for great stress laid in German reply on air convention was that that was a quite new proposal, whereas other matters mentioned in Anglo-French communiqué were already under discussion.

In reply to a question from me Baron von Neurath remarked that new French proposals regarding Eastern Pact would have to be very carefully considered for everything would depend on precise wording.

As for limitation of armaments convention His Excellency remains sceptical as to possibility of its conclusion, apart perhaps from agreeing to scrapping of certain heavy guns, gas and air bombardment behind the lines etc. He would however carefully consider any proposals you may care to make in the matter.

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Brussels and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> No. 477.

No. 488

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 22, 2.40 p.m.)*  
*No. 124 Telegraphic [C 1466/55/18]*

ROME, February 22, 1935, 2 p.m.

In the course of conversation with Signor Suvich last night we spoke of the German reply to the Anglo-French communiqué and later developments as reported in the newspapers. Signor Suvich's views were that great prudence would be required in dealing with Germany as results will have showed her remarkable resemblance to Oliver Twist.<sup>1</sup>

He then spoke of disquieting rate of German rearmament but, apart from the fact that he said that 3,000 aeroplanes were now under estimated,<sup>2</sup> did not add substantially to what I have already reported in my confidential despatch 181<sup>3</sup> of 18th February regarding recent interview with head of the Government.

<sup>1</sup> A reference to Mr. Bumble's remark: 'Oliver Twist has asked for more!' in Charles Dickens's novel *Oliver Twist*, chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> Sir R. Vansittart commented: 'This figure I think is that of the A[ir] M[inistry] but the Italians now think it less than the truth. What does the A.M. say? Their last paper was dated November. R.V.'

<sup>3</sup> No. 466.

Full report follows of this conversation by bag.<sup>4</sup>

I have now received your telegram No. 118<sup>5</sup> and have applied for an interview with Signor Mussolini.

Repeated to Berlin, Paris, Brussels and Moscow.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 495 below.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 480, note 1.

### No. 489

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 22, 3.35 p.m.)*  
*No. 67 Telegraphic [C 1467/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 22, 1935, 2.42 p.m.

Your telegram No. 32<sup>1</sup> to Paris.

German Government are unlikely to agree to proposed system for following reasons.

(1) System of French, German, and Russian guarantees would presumably amount in practice to one of mutual assistance. Germany, however, is unwilling to incur liability of being forced into other people's quarrels.

Germany is to be asked to guarantee a Russo-Lithuanian treaty and Russo-Polish treaty. Both the Chancellor and the Minister for Foreign Affairs have however told me that Germany would on no account risk the life of one German soldier in a Russo-Polish conflict or accept mutual assistance clause. While Germany is ready to conclude non-aggression pacts she has never suggested that she would welcome intervention of third parties to guarantee them.

(2) As regards Lithuania and Baltic States, proposed system appears to be very similar to that proposed by Russia to Germany last spring.<sup>2</sup> This was rejected at the time and there seems no reason to suppose that Germany's attitude has changed.

(3) Herr Hitler will certainly oppose any suggestion for guaranteeing Versailles settlement in the East, particularly when suggestion is supported by Soviet Russia. Nor will German public opinion fail to blame promoters [*sic*] of cumbrous scheme or to point to his readiness to conclude simple and immediate air pact.

(4) Neither German Russian treaty of 1926 nor conciliation treaty of 1929 were concluded with Herr Hitler's approval.

(5) Present moment is most inopportune for asking Germany to conclude a special non-aggression treaty with Lithuania whose behaviour towards her is foolishly provocative. If a satisfactory compromise could be reached on the point of Memel this objection would fall.

(6) Finally only advantage Germany will get in return for these unpopular commitments to her communist foes namely the right to re-arm, she appears to have taken already.

<sup>1</sup> No. 468.

<sup>2</sup> See *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. ii, Nos. 362 and 390.

The above are some reasons why proposal is likely to be ill-received and declined here. From British point of view there is the objection that discussion of such an intricate and extensive plan would involve great delay which would be used by Germany to proceed with her re-armament and consequently to increase her pretensions. I cannot conceive of a plan which would have enough 'teeth' to please the French and Russians and at the same time be sufficiently toothless to be acceptable to the Germans. I quite realise, however, that from a purely tactical point of view there may be some advantage in presenting to Germany another plan for guaranteeing stability in the East without entertaining any illusions as to likelihood of her accepting it and thus again placing the onus of refusal on her.

Repeated to Paris, Moscow, and Warsaw.

No. 490

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 22, 3.35 p.m.)*  
*No. 68 Telegraphic [C 1468/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 22, 1935, 2.57 p.m.

Your telegram No. 40.<sup>1</sup>

I quite agree with the views expressed in above.

Situation has entirely changed since publication of German reply and its discussion in the press.

Your visit here now seems to be essential in order

- (1) To remove any excuse for Germans' hurt feelings.
- (2) To enlighten Herr Hitler at first hand on attitude of His Majesty's Government towards all questions raised in Anglo-French communiqué, and
- (3) To obtain necessary first hand impression of real intentions of German Government on all points at issue.

In regard to (3) I only hope my impression may prove to have been unduly pessimistic. It will however be very desirable that press should not raise public hopes too much in connexion with approaching Anglo-German conversations. I said as much today to Baron von Neurath who heartily agreed with me.<sup>2</sup>

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Brussels and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> No. 479.

<sup>2</sup> In a private letter to Sir E. Phipps of even date, Sir R. Vansittart wrote: 'A line in great haste this evening in regard to the visit to Berlin. I think all is beginning to shape well now, and I shall be still better pleased if I can secure that the visit is followed by or connected with visits to Moscow and Warsaw. In any case the visit will now take place in unexceptionable terms, and while it may do some good (of this I have not much confidence) it will certainly do no harm. At one point I was afraid the fence might be rushed, but that point is passed safely, and I think you and I may both congratulate ourselves on the outcome. Yours ever, Van.'

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 22, 4.45 p.m.)*

*No. 10 Telegraphic [C 1503/55/18]*

WARSAW, *February 22, 1935, 3.45 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 32 to Paris.<sup>1</sup>

Poland has frequently expressed a preference for bilateral agreements and this fact might be made effective use of in urging her to accept new scheme.

Moreover present proposals have great advantage from Polish point of view of involving no extension of her existing commitments and for this reason would undoubtedly be regarded as a great improvement on original pact project though she might consider her amour propre slighted at being thus relegated with Lithuania to secondary and passive role in general plan.

New scheme would not, however, reassure Poland as regards her fundamental misgiving based on past history, viz., the possibility of German—and even more so of Russian—troops overrunning her territory in fulfilment of obligations of guarantor Powers even though such assistance were being rendered to Poland herself. For this reason I am inclined to think she would prefer that her non-aggression pacts should not be guaranteed by Germany or Russia more especially since she is already protected on her western frontier by her alliance with France.

A minor consideration which might be expected to influence Polish attitude would be that whilst scheme contains no provision covering eventual Polish-Lithuanian hostilities, it would tend to strengthen international position of Lithuania and thus to stiffen the latter's attitude regarding Vilna.

Exclusion of Czechoslovakia from scope of scheme would undoubtedly be a favourable factor from Polish point of view.

In view of great importance attached by Poland to her vastly improved relations with Germany, it is inevitable that her attitude towards new proposals would be governed very largely by that of Germany.

Finally it is of the utmost importance, if the scheme is to be proceeded with, that French Government should bear in mind extreme sensitiveness of Polish opinion and should therefore take Polish Government into their confidence at the earliest possible moment thus avoiding the error committed in regard to presentation of the Eastern pact.

Repeated to Berlin, Paris, Moscow and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 468.

No. 492

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 23, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 45 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1481/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 22, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs admitted to me that he had inspired the article in the Frankfurter Zeitung.

He talked bitterly about M. Litvinov and his note but said he had suggested to German press not to make too much fuss about it.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed: it summarized hostile German press comment on the Soviet attitude to the Anglo-French communiqué of February 3; cf. No. 475, enclosure.

No. 493

*Minute by Mr. Collier*  
*[C 1483/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 22, 1935

The Estonian Minister asked me yesterday whether it was the fact, as stated in the press,<sup>1</sup> that the Secretary of State or Mr. Eden were contemplating visits to Berlin, Warsaw and Moscow in connexion with the present communications on disarmament, etc.; and when I told him while nothing had yet been decided, such visits might be possible in certain circumstances, he said that he hoped he would not be regarded as presumptuous if he drew attention to the fact that the quickest way home from Moscow was *viâ* the Baltic States, and that for a British statesman to visit any place in those States, 'even between trains', would have an effect quite disproportionate to the time and trouble involved. The Latvian Minister made a similar statement this afternoon.

I told both Ministers that, while there were obvious difficulties in the way of increasing the number of countries to be visited if a visit took place at all, I thought there was something to be said for their suggestion, if the Eastern Pact were to eventuate in a form which included their countries; and I promised to submit it for the consideration of my Chiefs, emphasising, however, that the whole question of these visits was as yet far from settled, in spite of what had appeared in the press.

L. COLLIER

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Times*, February 21, p. 12.

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 1)**No. 87 [C 1674/55/18]*

MOSCOW, February 22, 1935

Sir,

The circumstances of M. Litvinov's expression of approval of the Anglo-French declaration, which the French Government had stated that he was ready to make, and the form in which such 'approval' is couched appear to me typical of M. Litvinov's methods and ingenuity. The Soviet note<sup>1</sup> which has now been delivered in London and Paris and published here is in essence a statement of Soviet aims and insistence upon the Eastern Pact. As to the origins of this statement of policy, intended as a move to influence public opinion abroad before any discussions are commenced upon the question of Eastern European security, I conjecture that M. Litvinov, extremely anxious in his heart of hearts as to the possible sidetracking or disruption of his scheme and at the same time always jealous of any proposals or negotiations in which he does not actually play a part, hinted to the French Ambassador here, who is hand in glove with him as to the Eastern Pact, that the Soviet Government should declare itself in some way. Or, conversely, M. Alphand may have suggested this to M. Litvinov. Hence, probably, the enquiry made to you by the French Ambassador in London on the 14th February as to the advisability of M. Litvinov's making open expression of his approval of the conversations in London, which question was answered in the affirmative.<sup>2</sup>

2. Subsequently, M. Alphand, speaking apparently for both Governments, told M. Litvinov that we should be glad of such an expression. Having learned this from my French colleague, I called on M. Litvinov and asked him whether it was true that he still approved in general the London Agreement, as he had told me he did when I had seen him last and as I reported in my telegram No. 15<sup>3</sup> of the 18th February. He replied by telling me that he had already drafted his statement and was on the point of sending instructions to Paris and London.

3. The communiqué as published in the Moscow press is preceded by a statement that the French Ambassador had informed M. Litvinov that the French as well as the British Government would be glad to learn the opinion of the Soviet Government on the basic features of the London Agreement: and that this had been confirmed by me on the 19th February. The line given to the press is that the invitation received by the Soviet Government to declare itself upon the London agreement constitutes an act of great political importance and a recognition of the leading part played by the Soviet Union in the cause of security and peace. It has always been the habit, and indeed the careful policy, of M. Litvinov to represent himself as being the one who is sought and invited.

<sup>1</sup> See enclosure in No. 475.<sup>2</sup> See No. 455.<sup>3</sup> No. 465.

4. Naturally enough M. Litvinov, while according a general welcome to the London declaration, has grasped the occasion to lay stress upon the indivisibility of its proposals, and on the absolute necessity of pacts of 'mutual immediate assistance' in Eastern no less than in Western Europe.

5. I have the impression that M. Litvinov is still anxious as to the fate of his Eastern Pact. And this is reflected in the press, which, while rejoicing that up to now Germany has not succeeded in 'driving a wedge between France and England,' fears that she may yet find support in London and that the pact may yet be sidetracked: and it is possible that there is more bravado than confident menace in the present slogan—'We do not need those who are hostile: we can make a pact without them.'

I have, &c.,  
CHILSTON

No. 495

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 1)*

No. 202 [C 1676/55/18]

ROME, February 22, 1935

Sir,

With reference to my telegram No. 124<sup>1</sup> I have the honour to inform you that after speaking to Signor Suvich yesterday evening on Abyssinian matters<sup>2</sup> I thought it well to inform him that you, Sir, were going to Paris on February 28th to fulfil a private engagement and to give a lecture. You would, however, no doubt take this opportunity to discuss various matters, and particularly the German reply, with the French Ministers. Italy would, of course, be kept fully informed, and I expected that a communication would shortly be addressed to the Italian Government either through myself or Signor Grandi.

2. Signor Suvich said that he had sent a telegram to Signor Grandi asking whether he could confirm the rumour that it had been decided that you should go to Berlin. I said that I did not think any decision had yet been taken on this point. It might well be, however, that some such visit would take place. After all there had been the French visit here and the French visit to London. Germany, as a Locarno Power, might feel rather neglected and it would be useful to remove any sense of grievance through conversations in Berlin.

3. Signor Suvich said that he quite understood this point of view, but he thought that if any visit took place the ground should be most carefully prepared beforehand. We ought all to exercise great prudence. As was shown from the Saar plebiscite, if Germany obtained one success she opened her mouth wider and wanted more. To follow, therefore, exactly the line she wished would only encourage her in excessive demands. I must not think, however, from this remark that the Italian Government were not most

<sup>1</sup> No. 488.

<sup>2</sup> These will be dealt with in Volume XIV of this Series.



anxious that an agreement should be come to with Germany. They were, but they had come to the conclusion that the best way of securing an agreement was by not showing excessive docility.

4. He remarked that he feared the Germans were still fastening on the air convention; they hoped to conclude that convention alone, thereby securing recognition of their right to rearm, and perhaps also to drive a wedge between England and France. I said to him that I did not think he need have any fears on this point. A statement had been issued in London<sup>3</sup> which showed that His Majesty's Government stood by the terms of the Anglo-French *communiqué* as a whole, but some beginning must be made and it might well be that a discussion on the air convention might facilitate matters. At any rate, I was convinced that nothing would take place without the fullest consultation between His Majesty's Government and those of France and Italy.

5. Signor Suvich then informed me that the information which the Italian Government were receiving was serious. It was clear that Germany was re-arming with the greatest vigour: in fact, he thought that they had already gone beyond the 3,000 aeroplanes which had been mentioned to me by the Head of the Government the other day. Information had reached them that the Germans had definitely decided that a future war must be fought more vertically than horizontally—in fact, that the horizontal warfare, as he put it, must be prepared by vertical attacks—and it was for this reason that they were devoting so much energy to their air forces. He was a little afraid that the interviews given to Lord Rothermere, Lord Allen and Lord Lothian<sup>4</sup> were of a kind which might lead English public opinion to be impressed by the peaceful intentions of Germany. I asked him whether he did not think that Herr Hitler himself was in favour of peace. He said that he believed that Herr Hitler was perfectly honest and was in favour of peace, but a German peace. He believed, like many other Germans, that Germany's mission was to impose German ideas on other nations. If these nations accepted them, well and good, but if not they must be made to do so. It was this that, in his mind, rendered the situation so serious; but he again added that Italy was in favour, if possible, of an agreement being reached with Germany. The German claim that a plebiscite should take place everywhere where Germans lived was, of course, ridiculous. Italy might just as well claim that there should be a plebiscite in San Paolo, where the Italian population was in a large majority. Personally he deeply regretted that the French had ever allowed the plebiscite to materialise in the Saar territory. It would have been very much better if they had used the Saar at a previous stage for bargaining purposes.<sup>5</sup> I could not but agree.

6. I have sent copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Paris and Berlin.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC DRUMMOND

<sup>3</sup> See *The Times*, February 20, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> See Nos. 294, 362, note 3, and 391.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 162, note 2.

**No. 496**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 23, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 127 Telegraphic [C 1482/55/18]*

ROME, February 22 [23],<sup>1</sup> 1935, 2.5 a.m.

Your telegram No. 118.<sup>2</sup>

Internal affairs completely absorbed Signor Mussolini's time today<sup>3</sup> and will probably do so tomorrow. Ministry of Foreign Affairs were apologetic but powerless to obtain interview and I was therefore constrained to give Signor Suvich an aide mémoire embodying substance of your telegram No. 39 to Berlin<sup>4</sup> using at the same time arguments set out in your telegram No. 40 to Berlin.<sup>5</sup>

Signor Suvich said he would see Signor Mussolini tomorrow at the earliest possible moment and either arrange for me also to see him or he would convey his views to me.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin, Brussels and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram, drafted on February 22, was presumably despatched at 2.5 a.m. on February 23.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 480, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. February 22.

<sup>4</sup> No. 477.

<sup>5</sup> No. 479.

**No. 497**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*  
*No. 125 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1482/55/18]<sup>1</sup>*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 23, 1935, 10.5 a.m.

Your telegram No. 127.<sup>2</sup>

You should let Signor Mussolini know that I have received a message of approval from Monsieur Laval (see paragraph 2 of Paris telegram No. 31).<sup>3</sup> I should greatly appreciate it if I could have a similar message from Signor Mussolini before Monday.<sup>4</sup> You will no doubt explain that German Govt. are expecting my visit.

<sup>1</sup> Only the approved draft of this telegram has been preserved in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>2</sup> No. 496.

<sup>3</sup> No. 486.

<sup>4</sup> February 25.

**No. 498**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 23, 6 p.m.)*  
*No. 130 Telegraphic [C 1508/55/18]*

ROME, February 23, 1935, 4.20 p.m.

Your telegram No. 125.<sup>1</sup>

Signor Suvich gave me a message this morning from Signor Mussolini saying that he concurred in the course you proposed to take. Signor Suvich

<sup>1</sup> No. 497.

added that I was aware of preoccupations of Italian Government over Oliver Twist tendency of German Government. I replied I had reported these<sup>2</sup> and that you realized their force but thought they were outweighed by the advantages which I had explained to him yesterday.<sup>3</sup> Signor Suvich seemed quite satisfied.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin, Brussels and Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 488.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 495.

#### No. 499

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 23, 7.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 7 Telegraphic [C 1509/55/18]*

BRUSSELS, February 23, 1935, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 14.<sup>1</sup>

Belgian Government fear your proposed formula<sup>2</sup> would be unsatisfactory to them for reason that should, for instance, Germany attack Italy, France under her special obligation to Italy would come to Italy's assistance. Germany would then counter-attack France. England and Belgium could hardly tell France that she is in the wrong as having provoked German attack herself by her previous assistance to Italy, an assistance which flows from an air convention bearing Belgian signature even if modified as regards Italy. England and Belgium would therefore 'by a ricochet' be brought into a war caused by violation of Italian territory—an extremely grave consequence in view of Italo-German tension about Austria.

Belgian Government are therefore inclined to prefer the negotiation of two separate air conventions as suggested in your broad-cast speech of February 3rd.

Despatch by bag tonight.<sup>3</sup>

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Berlin and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 444, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the formula proposed at the end of No. 429.

<sup>3</sup> This despatch, No. 107 of even date (received February 25), stated that Sir E. Ovey had discussed the problem with Baron van Züyen, who had said that he had been unable to discover any modification which 'could affect the defect inherent in both formulas, viz., that nothing therein would prevent Belgium being drawn by ricochet . . . into a war arising from, e.g., Italo-German tension over Austria'.

#### No. 500

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 23, 8.50 p.m.)*  
*No. 8 Telegraphic [C 1510/55/18]*

*Very confidential*

BRUSSELS, February 23, 1935, 7 p.m.

I learn very confidentially that the Minister for Foreign Affairs at The Hague<sup>1</sup> recently discussed with the Belgian Minister the hypothetical case

<sup>1</sup> Jonkheer de Graeff; cf. No. 418.

which might arise in which the Netherlands, being outside the Air Pact, the Power reputed to have committed the unprovoked aggression would not be the first to violate Dutch territory on land or in the air. This would technically according to actual conception of the rules of neutrality require Netherlands to adopt a hostile attitude to the Power or group of Powers having otherwise right on their side and thus in fact to ask for aid from the aggressors. Minister for Foreign Affairs speaking entirely confidentially went on to wonder whether it would not be possible to institute a new system of 'territorial air', in fact to fix a height above which air would be free for passage of aircraft, provided they did not land and that such a passage would not be considered a violation of neutrality.

This suggestion of course opens enormous possibilities; to quote most obvious one Holland would, while enjoying all rights of a neutral, cease entirely to be an air barrier to England or Belgium.

The Belgian Government would like to hear the view of His Majesty's Government on this important point. The Belgian Minister at The Hague is being instructed to discuss question with His Majesty's Minister.

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Berlin, Moscow and The Hague.

#### No. 501

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 24, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 70 Telegraphic [C 1507/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 23, 1935, 10.25 p.m.

I learn that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are well aware that both Paris and London are elaborating alternative schemes for Eastern Pact.

It must be remembered that Herr von Nadolny was recalled from Moscow merely because he supported Russian proposals for guaranteeing Baltic States.<sup>1</sup> We cannot therefore expect any assistance from Ministry of Foreign Affairs in trying to convert Herr Hitler to a revised form of Eastern Pact.

Repeated to Paris, Moscow, Rome and Brussels.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 199, note 5.

#### No. 502

*Mr. Torr (Riga) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 24, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 13 Telegraphic [C 1522/55/18]*

RIGA, February 23, 1935, 10.25 p.m.

Your telegram No. 5.<sup>1</sup>

Attitude of Latvian government is about as follows.

Prior to your conversations with French they were very much afraid of Franco-Russian alliance—though disguised as Eastern Pact—involving them

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram of February 8 Mr. Torr was authorized to 'give a full explanation of what passed at the [Anglo-French] London meeting' based on the official communiqué and other published official statements.

in war with Germany. M. Munters admitted to me that if France claimed that Eastern Pact was necessary to ensure these states against threat from Germany I could quite safely tell you that his government considered this just 'bunk' and personally I rather think that Latvia and Estonia were contemplating possible desirability, if Europe was to split into two camps, of aligning their policy with Poland's, upholding that Germany did not want war yet, had her hands too full to attempt *Drang Nach Osten* single handed and for at least some years would be likely to need these states and Poland as a buffer rather than as a field of conquest, there being bigger fish for her to fry on the banks of the Danube. Hence their anxiety (see my telegram No. 3 Saving)<sup>2</sup> lest Lithuanian foolish tactics should (a) divert Germany's attention in this direction, (b) strengthen Germany's case for demanding free hand in the East.

For the same reason however they mistrusted Russia's contention that Germany's willingness to subscribe to the Eastern Pact must be made a test of her good faith and thereby raise a perhaps unnecessary obstacle to rapprochement between the Great Powers whose divisions risk involving them in war—though they would of course be only too relieved if Germany willingly signed such a Pact. Since your London conversations with the French this point of view has been slightly modified by the fear that the programme evolved there will not be fulfilled in its [*sic*] entirety. If not, then the question would arise, M. Munters told me a few days ago, of deciding which camp to join.

Forecast of Cabinet's attitude as given in the 'Times' of February 20th<sup>3</sup> reflects exactly what they hoped for.

This morning M. Munters telephoned to me to draw my attention to that passage of Russian commentator's reply to the London communiqué in which the four Great Powers, Little Entente and Baltic Entente are described as favourable to idea of the Pacts of mutual assistance.<sup>4</sup> He said that if I was reporting to you I might mention that Latvia was also favourable.

<sup>2</sup> In this telegram of February 6 Mr. Torr reported a conversation that day with M. Munters who 'embarked on a long dissertation against danger of letting Russia into Europe, which Franco-Russian entente involved' and said that his Government 'took the line' that the Memel question was a Lithuanian affair but objected to the 'Lithuanian endeavour to raise their little problem to the status of a big international issue, trying to pose as a second Austria and appealing to other Powers with sensational accounts of aggressive German military preparations. Latter were a myth. Germany certainly did not want to start trouble up here.'

<sup>3</sup> i.e. that in any Anglo-German conversation which took place 'the German Government should be urged to indicate its views on all the proposals which were put forward and not merely on the proposed Air Convention'. See *The Times*, February 20, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 475, enclosure.

**No. 503**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 24, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 69 Telegraphic [C 1506/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 23, 1935, 10.35 p.m.

My telegram No. 59.<sup>1</sup>

I hear from a good source, but very confidential, that Herr von Ribbentrop has gone up in Chancellor's estimation owing to success of his proposal in German reply for Anglo-German conversations. Herr von Bülow regarded suggestion as *infra dig* but was over-ruled by Herr Hitler who realised the internal political advantage to himself of direct conversations with us.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs are now trembling lest Herr von Ribbentrop should get a job and even conceivably some day that of Baron von Neurath's.

<sup>1</sup> No. 463.

**No. 504**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 24, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*Unnumbered Telegraphic [C 1834/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 23, 1935, 11.40 p.m.

Following for Sir R. Vansittart:

*Personal and Private.*

A high official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told a member of my staff today that the Chancellor would greatly appreciate an exchange of views with you personally precisely because he is convinced you are opposed to him.

**No. 505**

*Mr. Steel<sup>1</sup> (The Hague) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 26, 11.50 a.m.)*  
*No. 3 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1555/55/18]*

THE HAGUE, February 25, 1935

Your despatch No. 68<sup>2</sup> and Brussels telegram No. 8 to Foreign Office.<sup>3</sup>

You will be aware from Sir H. Montgomery's private letter to Sir R. Vansittart of February 5th<sup>4</sup> that the position of Holland in regard to proposed air convention is exercising the mind of the Netherlands Government, and it would seem that activities of Netherlands representatives in London and Brussels are the result of definite instructions from The Hague.

Belgian Minister has not so far mentioned the matter to me but will probably do so at a ball at his house tonight. The Minister for Foreign

<sup>1</sup> Mr. C. E. Steel was Second Secretary in H.M. Legation at the Hague.

<sup>2</sup> No. 459.

<sup>3</sup> No. 500.

<sup>4</sup> No. 418.

Affairs is confined to bed and is unlikely to make any move for the present. At the same time it would be of great assistance to me to know line upon which you would wish me to speak if questioned on this very complex problem and I would venture to submit respectfully following considerations.

I observe in concluding paragraph of your despatch under reference that Sir R. Vansittart expressed the opinion that any initiative in the matter (of Dutch participation in the convention) should come from Dutch themselves. Since Sir R. Vansittart's conversation with the Belgian Ambassador the Dutch have given abundant proof of their interest in this matter, always bearing in mind that they have undertaken not to present the States General with a *fait accompli* (see Sir H. Montgomery's despatch No. 84)<sup>5</sup> so that they cannot well make a firm offer to His Majesty's Government. I quite understand attitude of His Majesty's Government to this problem cannot be determined in a moment and that it is desirable to refrain from committing ourselves, as indeed we have consistently done here. At the same time danger of an indefinite delay in determining our attitude is pointed by proposal mentioned in paragraph 2 of Brussels telegram No. 8.<sup>3</sup> It is by no means inconceivable that Dutch passion for neutrality, their abhorrence of any war-like commitments might prompt them to try to escape from their unpleasant position by a unilateral declaration extending 3 mile limit vertically i.e. to about (?1,500 (sic))<sup>6</sup> feet. I realise the objections especially the possibility of aerial engagements above limit leading to machines crashing in Dutch territory. At the same time suggestion seems to me on an uninstructed view so seriously objectionable to His Majesty's Government that Dutch participation in convention would be distinctly preferable.

I would therefore suggest for consideration that efforts should be made to avoid deluding Netherlands Government by too evasive attitude and that hints might at least be given that question was under technical examination. To continue saying that we are not considering Holland in the matter, even if true, is liable to be misinterpreted in this very air-minded country and it would always be possible and acceptable to suggest that we are examining best means of safeguarding Dutch neutrality.

I shall meanwhile maintain that I am without instructions though I shall if pressed emphasize . . .<sup>6</sup> of 'territorial air' idea.

<sup>5</sup> Not printed. This despatch of February 19 referred to statements made by the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jonkheer de Graeff, to the First Chamber of the States General on February 15.

<sup>6</sup> The text is here uncertain.

No. 506

*Mr. Browne (Saarbrücken) to Sir J. Simon*  
(Received February 26, 5.20 p.m.)  
*Unnumbered Telegraphic [C 1559/1/18]*

SAARBRÜCKEN, February 26, 1935, 5 p.m.

Your telegram No. 6.<sup>1</sup>

Administration will be handed over by the Governing Commission to Committee of Three on afternoon of 28th after which Mr. Knox will leave immediately.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Knox has arranged with the assent of the German Government to hand over police powers to German authorities before noon on the 28th from which time latter will be responsible for maintenance of order.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Knox does not anticipate anything more than minor discourtesy.

It is understood that the Committee will hand over to the German Government on the morning of March 1st.<sup>4</sup>

Repeated to Rome, Paris and Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram of February 25 Mr. Browne was asked to telegraph full details of the arrangements made for the formal handing over to Germany of the administration of the Saar, and to say whether he anticipated any unpleasant demonstrations.

<sup>2</sup> On the termination of his service under the League of Nations on March 1 Mr. Knox was made a K.C.M.G., and, in October 1935, he was promoted to be H.M. Minister at Budapest.

<sup>3</sup> The international force had been gradually withdrawn from the Saar territory since the middle of February; the last British contingent departed on February 26.

<sup>4</sup> The official record of the transfer is printed in *L/N.O.J.*, April 1935, pp. 529-30.

No. 507

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Steel (The Hague)*  
*No. 2 Telegraphic [C 1555/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 26, 1935, 6 p.m.

*Immediate*

Your telegram No. 3 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Following from Sir R. Vansittart.

I have not had opportunity to submit your telegram to Secretary of State, but send the following for your immediate guidance in case you are questioned on the subject.

The idea of three mile vertical limit appears to me grotesque and totally unacceptable and you may pour as much cold water on it as you like.

Question of Dutch participation in an air convention has not formed the subject of any decision by the Cabinet and I cannot therefore go beyond the opinion I expressed to the Belgian Ambassador and which Mr. Eden

<sup>1</sup> No. 505.



expressed to Netherlands Minister (see Foreign Office despatch No. 68),<sup>2</sup> namely that initiative in this matter must come from the Dutch.

For your own information I consider the suggestion of Dutch participation interesting and important and shall take early opportunity of bringing it again before the Secretary of State.

<sup>2</sup> No. 459.

### No. 508

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 26, 9.55 p.m.)*  
*No. 74 Telegraphic [C 1557/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 26, 1935, 9.25 p.m.

I hear Herr von Ribbentrop is anxious to take steps to ensure that you should not go on to Moscow anyhow direct from Berlin as he feels that would take the gilt off the gingerbread for Germany.

I also hear Ministry of Foreign Affairs are sensible enough to realise that they had best leave well alone and not risk upsetting public opinion in England by joining in a press campaign there or starting one here to prevent you going on to Moscow. It seems however that Herr von Ribbentrop's influence with the Chancellor is growing notwithstanding.

### No. 509

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 27, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 31 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1558/55/18]*

*Confidential*

PARIS, February 26, 1935

I found M. Léger yesterday very pre-occupied over the Eastern Pact difficulty. For nearly two years, he said, the general staff, supported by a considerable section of political opinion, had been urging that it was folly for France not to conclude a bilateral agreement with Russia which was hers for the asking. Though it was obviously rash to count on any direct assistance in the field, it would be invaluable to France to have Russia's vast industrial resources at her disposal. The victory in any future war, if it were not decided in a few days, would go in the end to the country which could turn out the larger number of aircraft day by day. Under the guidance of French engineers there was practically no limit to Russia's potential output. M. Léger had consistently combatted this tendency against at times even his own ministers (M. Boncour<sup>1</sup> and M. Barthou) on the ground that it would not be conducive to the restoration of confidence which is the sole basis of lasting peace.

<sup>1</sup> M. Paul-Boncour had been Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1933 in the ministries of M. Daladier, M. Sarraut, and M. Chautemps.

2. I gathered that he was thus not enamoured of M. Bargeton's scheme (my telegram No. 30)<sup>2</sup> since, if Germany persists in her refusal to contract any mutual assistance obligations, it will be impossible for France to contract such an obligation towards Germany. Any Franco-Russian agreement would therefore have the appearance of being, and would in fact be, directed against her. It would moreover be difficult, M. Léger continued, to circumscribe a Franco-Russian agreement for mutual assistance unless it were part and parcel of some strictly regional arrangement. It could be confined to Europe, as was the pre-war alliance, but even so it might have undesirable consequences. It might even bring France and Great Britain into conflict on a question which was not of vital importance to either.

3. M. Laval to-day also told me that he was anxious to avoid a Franco-Russian agreement except as a part of a homogeneous regional arrangement.

4. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would seem thus to have failed so far to find a satisfactory alternative to the Eastern Pact as formulated last July. Repeated to Berlin, Brussels, Rome, Moscow and Warsaw.

<sup>2</sup> No. 482.

#### No. 510

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 27, 9.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 78 Telegraphic [C 1608/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 27, 1935, 9.30 p.m.

French Ambassador will probably suggest to Monsieur Laval that he should propose to you to postpone decision whether to go to Moscow or not till after your Berlin conversations. If the latter are fairly satisfactory no doubt visit might be unnecessary. If Germans realise this it might possibly, the Ambassador thinks, make them more reasonable.

Repeated to Paris.

#### No. 511

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 27, 10 p.m.)*  
*No. 77 Telegraphic [C 1631/55/18]*

*Secret*

BERLIN, February 27, 1935, 9.32 p.m.

In private conversation with me late last night the Chancellor's private secretary remarked how easy it would be for Great Britain and Germany to come to an agreement on all subjects. He added regretfully, however, that it seemed to be the policy of His Majesty's Government not to contemplate any separate arrangement. I replied that this was so for they felt peace and 'apaisement' must be general.

It is quite possible that Chancellor, in the course of Berlin conversations, may approach you on these lines. There are of course many highly placed persons in Nazi party, in the army and in official circles who strongly support the idea of an Anglo-German understanding.

Repeated to Paris.

**No. 512**

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received February 28)*

*No. 11 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1629/55/18]*

BRUSSELS, February 27, 1935

Following for Sir Robert Vansittart.

Belgian Government would much appreciate it if Secretary of State could find it convenient to stop at Brussels either on his way to or return from Berlin. They feel such a visit would have excellent effect on Belgian and international opinion.

They will not issue a formal invitation until they learn whether Secretary of State's arrangements permit.

I venture strongly to support the suggestion.

**No. 513**

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent<sup>1</sup>*

*[C 1726/55/18]*

BERLIN, February 27, 1935

My dear Sargent,

I was very interested to read Van's memorandum on the international position of the Soviet Union enclosed in your letter of February 21st.<sup>2</sup>

The general conclusions seem to be unexceptionable. Since you ask for my observations I presume you would like to hear my views particularly on the position of Germany and I propose therefore to deal solely with this aspect.

Van appears to fear that there is some danger of a détente between Germany and Russia. Nothing is impossible in this world and any speculations regarding the future development of European relations must, of course, take into account this possibility. But if we confine ourselves to examining the factors which are known to us, I should say that everything points to a perpetuation, at all events for the present, of the existing tension between the two countries. Nor do I think that it would be safe to draw an analogy between Italy and Germany. Signor Mussolini, as the memorandum points out, is able to combine a vigorous persecution of communism at home with the

<sup>1</sup> This letter was filed in the Foreign Office on March 4.

<sup>2</sup> This covering letter is not printed: it enclosed a copy of No. 484.

maintenance of good relations with Moscow. He is also able to preach the totalitarian state and at the same time maintain good relations with the Pope. But the Italians have always been adepts at 'combinazioni', whereas the Germans are probably not subtle enough to be able to achieve this and I doubt whether they ever will be.

Quite apart, however, from the difference between the Italian and the German temperament there is the personality of Hitler. As you will have gathered from Lothian's conversation,<sup>3</sup> for example, Hitler seems completely obsessed with the communist peril and those who have witnessed the daily street fighting which went on for many years between the Nazis and the communists feel that it would be as difficult for Hitler to discard his anti-communist principles as it would be for him to abandon his anti-semitic campaign. So far neither the army nor the Ministry for Foreign Affairs nor the industrialists have succeeded in making any impression on him on these two points.

There are other considerations of a more general character which may be calculated to confirm Hitler in pursuing his anti-communist policy. First, it will be difficult for Germany to establish good relations with Russia without spoiling the entente, which she has developed with Poland at the expense of much pains and even sacrifice. Secondly, I imagine that the present German idea in the event of a world upheaval would be to obtain some rectification of the Polish Corridor by agreement with Poland in return for compensation to Poland at the expense of Russia.<sup>4</sup> According to the Military Attaché<sup>5</sup> the ambitions of the Reichswehr to recover the central part of the Corridor have been more or less definitely abandoned, and German claims would probably be satisfied by a fair slice in the North to give definite access to East Prussia, together perhaps with some rectification in Upper Silesia. Thirdly, the mistrust and dislike of the Teuton for the Slav are not wholly a product of National Socialism but are traditional.<sup>6</sup>

Another consideration closely affecting Germany, to which attention is drawn in the memorandum, is the desirability of keeping Russia sweet by finding a solution for the Eastern Pact problem. The arguments put forward are cogent enough, but it seems to me that an equally cogent argument is the necessity for impressing Hitler. The more Germany realises the danger of isolating herself from the rest of Europe the more likely she is to prove amenable. Thus, for example, if the Secretary of State extends his visit to Warsaw and Moscow, he will have the Wilhelmstrasse guessing with the probable result that the forces for moderation here will be strengthened.

Yours ever,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>3</sup> See No. 391.

<sup>4</sup> A marginal note by Mr. Collier here read: 'The Poles would never give that.'

<sup>5</sup> Colonel A. Thorne.

<sup>6</sup> A marginal note by Mr. Collier here read: 'But that would prevent a permanent friendship with the Poles (who are as much slaves as the Russians).'

**No. 514**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 43 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1608/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 28, 1935, 12.30 p.m.*

Following from Sir R. Vansittart.

Berlin telegram No. 78.<sup>1</sup>

The French Ambassador at Berlin has evidently completely misunderstood our motives and ideas. He appears to assume that the journey to Moscow and Warsaw is contemplated for purposes of the Eastern pact alone. This of course is very wide of the mark. Since attempts are being made to modify the structure of the proposed Eastern pact—with some possibility of success—the journey might very probably be useful in this particular respect. But that is in any case only a small part of the reason for a journey which has been contemplated on grounds of far wider and higher policy.

The idea of the French Ambassador that His Majesty's Government should resort to undisguised blackmail for so limited an end seems childish. Moreover any attempt to put such tactics into practice would of course immediately either become or be made known with results that would be considered unhappy and dangerous by France herself, indeed by everyone except Germany. I need not dwell upon the consequences of the effect on Russia, not only in her relations with us but in her relations with France, of the effect of being allowed to discover—and the German Government would naturally see to this—that we were attempting to use her as a mere pawn in Anglo-German bargaining. The French Ambassador's idea is in fact a fantastic one.

Repeated to Berlin, No. 45.

<sup>1</sup> No. 510.

**No. 515**

*Note by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald*  
*[C 1720/55/18]*

*Secret*

*[London, undated]*

*Notes on attached telegrams<sup>1</sup>*

(To Foreign Office but not for wider circulation.)

I think it is a pity that the visit to Berlin and the contemplated visit to Moscow have been mixed up. That may diminish the effect of both and

<sup>1</sup> A note on the filed copy lists these as '(Berlin 74, 75, 77, 78. To Paris 43)', i.e. Nos. 508, 510, 511, and 514; Berlin telegram No. 75 of February 27, not printed, referred to the memorandum sent to Paris and Rome on January 27 by the German Government; cf. No. 394, note 1.

involve us in European rivalries, a thing to be avoided at all costs at present. It has also thrown the visits into the diplomatic cockpit, and whether the visits are made in continuation or separately has now been made the subject of German, French and Russian intrigue. The German visit is due, if for no other reason, as an inevitable sequence to the French interviews. Events have shown that it would have been better if it had been preceded by a German visit to London, but that became a tactic in which our hands were forced. I hope we shall not now, in our haste to comprehend Europe in the scope of our diplomacy, move on every field at once and overfill our hands with simultaneous negotiations on every point covered by the Anglo-French declaration and from every national angle. It is essential that we should improve our contacts with Russia, but in nearly every respect Russia and Germany are fundamentally different propositions to us, and the fitting of Russia into a scheme of European co-operation cannot be done in the same way as Germany. What we have to do is to make our own minds clear on what is the general scheme which we want and the problems which Germany and Russia present individually. The rivalry in mind and purpose between the two ought to keep us from acting in such a way that we are used by the rivalry for its own purposes. Both expect us to act with them, but neither should be led to expect that we shall deal with them as though they hung upon each other. Get to close grips with Berlin; meanwhile tell Russia we should like if Lit[vinov] would come to London as we wish to discuss frankly with him the whole European situation and that after considering the results of the talk we should be prepared to continue the subject at Moscow.

J. R. M.

## No. 516

### *Memorandum on present state of the German Air Force* [C 1866/55/18]

*Secret*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 28, 1935*

In view of the numerous recent estimates we have received from various sources notably from France and Italy of the present strength of Germany's air force, the present may be a suitable moment to bring up to date our information on the subject. The latest information is that contained in C.I.D. Papers 1150-, 1151-, 1159-B.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Air Ministry have furnished the figures contained in Annexes I and II to this memorandum, showing the growth of the German air strength since 1933 and its present composition, and in Annex III which makes a comparison between the strength of the British, French and German air forces for the next 18 months, divided into the figures for first line aircraft and for

<sup>1</sup> Not printed here. Cf. paragraph 7 below and No. 211, note 2.

all service type aircraft. They emphasise, however, that the real criterion of strength in the air lies not so much in any of these figures as in the present manufacturing capacity of a country. This capacity will determine the output of aircraft in the vital period between the destruction of the original air fleet in the first few weeks of war, and the moment, possibly several months after the outbreak of war, when the factories, reorganised on a war footing, will be able to produce an emergency output. The German superiority over both France and ourselves in this respect is immeasurably great, as the German factories are already practically organised on an emergency war-time footing.

3. In the absence of a statistical comparison of manufacturing capacity, comparison of first line figures probably provides the most satisfactory criterion, particularly in view of the secrecy which surrounds French figures and those of our own Air Ministry for the immediate reserves of machines. (The Air Ministry have particularly asked that the figures under 'Home Defence, B', for the various dates should under no circumstances be communicated to a Mission abroad.) It is known at the moment that the French aircraft reserves are extremely low, but it is imagined that the French Government will aim at bringing them up to the same proportion of immediate reserve to first line as is kept in our own air force.

4. French estimates of the present and future levels of the German air force are in substantial agreement with the Air Ministry estimates, particularly in so far as first line figures are concerned. Comparison of the total number of aircraft of all types existing in various countries is of no practical significance, but it is thought that it is this figure which is implied by the various Italian mentions of the number of 3,000.<sup>2</sup> The Air Ministry figures for all types in Germany are extremely inconclusive; in particular they appear to have no very exact idea of the total number of light training aircraft which are being produced at the moment. The question is in any case of secondary importance.

5. The figures for first line, and service type aircraft, show that, if present tendencies continue unchecked, the German air force will have a larger number of machines in each category than either our Home Defence air force or the French metropolitan forces, before October 1936. Indeed it seems probable that they will surpass both the figures for our own home-stationed air force towards the end of the present year. (See Annex III.) They will have the additional advantage of possessing entirely new material throughout. This programme once realised, the Air Ministry believe that the Germans will then begin a further expansion programme, to culminate in 1939. The present output of aircraft in Germany is given at between 160-180 machines with engines per month.

6. The aviation section of the Berlin Annual Report for 1934<sup>3</sup> reports the centralisation of subsidiary services for aviation—meteorology—air defence—in the whole country, which has been divided into areas for the purpose, while the air force proper is taking shape on its own, free from undue interference

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 488.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

by the older services. The expansion of aerodromes and flying and ground personnel is increasing at a high rate. Training is carried out by the Deutsche Luftsport-Verband, whose membership is now believed to approach 100,000, and by the Deutsche Verkehrsflieger-Schule, whose members have attained a high level of efficiency in formation flying, air fighting and specialised flying training.

7. From information obtained from the Air Ministry, it is thought that the organisation of the German air force—at present cloaked under the shields of the Deutsche Luftsport-Verband, the Deutsche Verkehrsflieger-Schule, and Luftfahrtministerium,—has reached a very advanced stage, the organisations of the Air Staff and Schools Inspectorate being shown in C.I.D. paper 1150-B, and a list of the different Command, Group, Wing and Squadron Headquarters being given in C.I.D. 1159-B. The French General Staff have also given us a plan of the regional distribution of German aerodromes and flying training schools.<sup>4</sup>

8. The views of the Air Ministry on the size at which it is desired that the German air force should be limited in present circumstances have been expressed in Cabinet Paper 23/53.<sup>5</sup> This paper states that we should, from a defence point of view, be prepared, if it became necessary, to concede to Germany metropolitan equality with France, Italy or ourselves—a figure of approximately 1,000 first line aircraft. Reserves would be calculated as a certain percentage of first line strength, which Germany should be asked to undertake not to exceed, while it is impossible either to specify what types of aircraft should be used or what should be the limits of the personnel employed in the air force.

9. The figure hitherto demanded by the German Government in its note of April 16th, 1934, was '30% of the combined air forces of Germany's neighbours, or 50% of the total aircraft strength of France, either in France itself or in the French North African possessions, whichever figure was the less'.<sup>6</sup> The figures now mentioned as possible German demands are 2,500 aircraft<sup>7</sup> (it is not known whether this estimate includes reserves), and 25% of the forces of all Germany's neighbours, including Russia.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 149.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 372.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 289, note 1.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. No. 392.

<sup>8</sup> Mr. Creswell, who prepared the memorandum, noted on March 11: 'An endeavour was made to get the A[ir] M[inistry] finally to check and approve the memo. and annexes as it stands. But it proved impossible to get them to commit themselves . . .' In the course of a minute of March 8 Mr. Wigram wrote: 'If this memorandum is correct, what becomes of Mr. Baldwin's statement of last November [28] that we would in no circumstances accept inferiority to Germany in the air—by which I have always understood inferiority in the Home Defence figures?'



# ANNEX I TO No. 516

Secret

## *Estimated figures shewing growth of German Air Force*

Date	1st Line	Total Service Types	Total all types available for Service use <sup>(1)</sup>	Output per Annum	
				Aircraft	Pilots
January 1933	..	127	327	480	500
February 1934	..	338	788	720	950
October 1934	} See Note (ii)	900	1,450	1,680	1,250
March 1935		1,275	1,875	2,040	1,500
October 1935	594	1,788	2,388	2,160	..
October 1936	1,296	3,192	3,792	..	..

*Note (i).* 'All types available for Service use' include total service types (with reserves) plus light training aircraft and convertible commercial aircraft.

*Note (ii).* As already explained, it is believed that all the necessary Headquarters and Ancillary Units are not yet formed and it is possible, therefore, at the present time, to speak of the German Air Force in terms of total numbers only, and not in terms of First Line and Immediate Reserve.

*Note (iii).* There are also approximately 900 aircraft of exclusively civil types in Germany.

# ANNEX II TO No. 516

## *Estimate of German air strength on the 25th February and 1st October 1935*

	25th February 1935	1st October 1935
First Line Aircraft	850 <sup>(1)</sup>	594
Immediate Reserve Aircraft		594
Service Type Trainers	300	400
Immediate Reserve S.T. Trainers	125	200
TOTAL SERVICE TYPES	1,275	1,788
Light Trainers	400	400
TOTAL AIR FORCE STRENGTH	1,675	2,188
Adaptable Luft Hansa and other commercial Aircraft	200	200
TOTAL ALL TYPES	1,875	2,388

*Note (i).* As it is believed that all the necessary Headquarters and Ancillary Units are not yet formed the present strength can be expressed in total numbers only and not divided into First Line and Immediate Reserve.

# ANNEX III TO No. 516

## *Comparison between the estimated strengths of the home air forces of Germany, Great Britain and France*

Date		Germany	Stationed in G.B.	Metropolitan France
March 1935	A.	400-500*	580	1,000
	B.	1,275	1,930	2,400
October 1935	A.	594	580	1,000
	B.	1,788	1,930	2,800
October 1936	A.	1,296	710	1,050
	B.	3,192	2,250	3,050

\* *Note in original: 'See Annex II, note (i)'.*

A. First line strength.

B. Total Service types.

*Note I.* The United Kingdom also possesses some 950-1,000 aircraft (including reserves) stationed abroad and in the Naval Air Arm.

The corresponding French figure is some 850-900 aircraft, rising to 1,000 at the end of 1935.

*Note II.* The 'B' figures for France are very rough estimations, no exact information being obtainable.

## No. 517

### *Record of an Anglo-French Conversation at His Majesty's Embassy, Paris, on Thursday, February 28, 1935, at 2 p.m.*

[C 1657/55/18]

Present:

#### *United Kingdom*

Sir John Simon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Sir George Clerk, His Majesty's Ambassador, Paris.

Mr. Campbell, His Majesty's Minister, Paris.

Mr. Strang, Foreign Office.

#### *France*

M. Pierre Laval, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

M. Alexis Léger, Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

#### *Visit to Berlin*

SIR JOHN SIMON said he would probably visit Berlin towards the end of the following week, and would perhaps be accompanied by Mr. Eden. It was certain that he would have to return to London after the Berlin visit in order to report to his colleagues and to communicate further with the French Government. It had not yet been decided whether he would visit other capitals, such as Moscow, Warsaw and Prague. If such visits were decided

upon, Mr. Eden would probably go, as it would be difficult for Sir John Simon himself to be away so long.

Sir John Simon recalled that before accepting the invitation to Berlin he wished the object of his visit to be clearly understood. The German Government had agreed that the object of the visit would be 'to carry consultations a stage further on all the matters referred to in the Anglo-French communiqué,' and that 'it would not be the object of the meeting to isolate one topic to the exclusion of others, but to have an exchange of views on the totality of the matters there referred to.'<sup>1</sup> He would go to Berlin with no clear line marked out, but for purposes of exploration in order to sound the views of the German Government and to discuss with them the ground covered by the Anglo-French communiqué. On his return he would inform the French Government of what had passed.

Sir John Simon added that it would not be possible to defer much longer a decision about the Moscow visit. He would have liked to put off the decision until after his return from Berlin, but he feared that the interest which the question was arousing in England would make it desirable to come to a decision before that. Had M. Laval any views about such a visit?

### *Eastern Pact*

M. LAVAL said that he entirely agreed with the programme so far as it related to Berlin. As regards the other point, he had just had a visit from the Soviet Ambassador, who, knowing he was about to see Sir John Simon, had made certain observations about the Eastern Pact. He had recalled the protocol signed by M. Laval and M. Litvinov at Geneva by which the two Governments undertook not to take any step inconsistent with the Eastern Pact in the form originally contemplated without consulting each other.<sup>2</sup> The Ambassador had suggested that M. Laval should confine himself to telling Sir John Simon that he was awaiting a reply from the Germans to his note of last January about the Eastern Pact,<sup>3</sup> and that when the reply was received he would have to consult with the Soviet Government. The Ambassador further intimated that, when that reply was received, he would ask for a Franco-Soviet meeting. M. Laval asked the Ambassador whether he had any views about the idea of a visit by Sir John Simon to Moscow, but he apparently knew nothing about this. M. Laval's personal view, therefore, was that the Soviet Government would prefer that the visit should not take place until after they had been acquainted with the final German observations upon the Eastern Pact as originally contemplated.

M. Laval said that he was hoping for the German reply to come shortly, but he knew in advance what it would be. The German Government were prepared to accept a multilateral pact, but it must be confined to non-aggression and consultation. They would refuse any obligation to afford assistance. He had had personal conversations with the German Ambassador on the subject, and had asked him whether he thought Germany would think it unfriendly if France were to afford assistance on a reciprocal basis to other

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Nos. 477 and 487.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 253, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 342, note 1.

parties to the pact, provided that it was open to Germany to assume obligations of mutual assistance if she wished. He had even gone so far as to suggest that the German Government should inform the Polish Government that they would not think it unfriendly if the latter entered into obligations of mutual assistance. He did this because the Poles apparently thought that the Germans would object to their entering into any such obligations, and that this might weaken the present German-Polish understanding. In speaking thus, he had to speak personally and unofficially in view of his obligation to the Soviet Government. He had signed the Geneva agreement about the Eastern Pact with M. Litvinov in order to pacify the Soviet Government and to forestall any tendency on their part to turn towards Germany again. When the German reply was received, he would therefore inform the Soviet Government. The Soviet Government would ask for conversations with the French Government. Only after these conversations had opened, would he be able to make to the Soviet Government the suggestions for an adaptation of the Eastern Pact which he had already unofficially made to both the German and Polish Ambassadors. The purpose of the Soviet Ambassador's rather pointed *démarche* was therefore to warn M. Laval, and through him Sir John Simon, against giving any undertaking to the Germans as regards a possible adaptation of the Eastern Pact away from its original conception. M. Laval would therefore be glad if Sir John Simon could ask the Germans to send a reply as soon as possible, whatever that reply might be.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that it would be natural if at the same time the Germans were to tell him what their own views were. He was convinced that the Germans would not accept the pact in its original form.

M. LAVAL then referred to the suggestions which we had made to the French Government for an adaptation of the pact (Foreign Office telegram to Paris, No. 32 of the 19th February),<sup>4</sup> and pointed out that the Germans were prepared to go further than we ourselves had anticipated. They were ready to accept the multilateral form, but only, of course, within the limits of non-aggression and consultation.

#### *Air Pact*

SIR JOHN SIMON then turned to the Air Pact, and said that the Foreign Office had been studying the question, but had not yet produced a definite text.

M. LAVAL thereupon communicated a text prepared by the Quai d'Orsay (see Annex).<sup>5</sup> He hoped Sir John Simon would examine this paper, which was not an official document, but a tentative attempt at a text. The crucial provision in this draft was, he said, Protocol III, which recognised that, pending the entry into force of the pact, the signatories, or some of them, could, if they wished, concert without delay by way of bilateral negotiations in order to obtain a mutual assurance of the guarantees provided by the pact for the period between its conclusion and coming into force. The pact

<sup>4</sup> No. 468.

<sup>5</sup> The Annex contained the French text of the draft Air Convention and an English translation. Only the latter is reproduced in the Annex below.

would, of course, be part of the general settlement, but during the long negotiations before the conclusion of the general settlement Germany would go on rearming and it would be necessary for the signatories to be protected against attack by her. The temporary arrangements for mutual assistance would be bilateral, e.g., they might be between France and Great Britain, or between Great Britain and Germany.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he would study this draft very carefully. He could not, of course, comment on it for the present. Even though the Air Pact might only come into force as part of a general settlement, it was desirable to push on with the drafting of it. He understood M. Laval's idea to be that the Air Pact itself would not contain figures of air armaments. These figures would be included in the subsequent general convention.

M. LÉGER said that in the French view the figures for air armaments might be included in complementary bilateral agreements. (M. Léger did not explain this proposal any further.)

SIR JOHN SIMON enquired whether the French Government were prepared to give a guarantee to Italy in the Air Pact.

M. LAVAL said that he was in no hurry to make any statement to that effect. Before doing so, he would like the Italian Government first to come more closely into line with him in Central Europe. He had insisted both to the Italian Ambassador and to the Austrian Ministers that Rome and Belgrade must improve their relations. Until that was done, it would be difficult for France to do anything more for Italy. Signor Mussolini had promised him in Rome<sup>6</sup> to make a declaration of a friendly character towards Yugoslavia and he expected that this would be made early in March. In all his dealings with Italy he had to bear in mind the feelings of the Little Entente, particularly Yugoslavia, whose common economic interest with Germany was strong and where the Germans had great influence on the press.

### *Armaments*

M. LAVAL said that there was a further point which he hoped Sir John Simon would bear in mind in Berlin. Herr Hitler would probably state his claims in the matter of armaments. He would like Sir John Simon to know the limits which the French Government thought ought not to be exceeded, in particular as regards aircraft. The question of a margin of superiority for France would arise in this connexion. (When he began speaking M. Laval had apparently intended to communicate a paper on this point, but he did not in fact do so.)

SIR JOHN SIMON said he thought that Germany would say it was impossible to fix the limits of air armaments without taking account of those of Russia.

M. LÉGER said that the question was: did Germany still stand by her statement of the 16th April, 1934?<sup>7</sup>

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that he was sure that she did not.

M. LÉGER wondered whether equality of rights had not now come to mean parity in concrete fact.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 335, enclosure.

<sup>7</sup> See Cmd. 4559, note 6.

### *Demilitarised Zone*

M. LAVAL said that from information he had received it seemed possible that Herr Hitler might raise the question of the demilitarised zone. If he did he hoped that Sir John Simon would be very firm. He had heard from Belgian sources that Herr Hitler had made some very disquieting remarks to His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin about the demilitarised zone.<sup>8</sup>

SIR JOHN SIMON said that His Majesty's Government were signatories of the Treaty of Locarno, and the question of the demilitarised zone was not a matter for discussion.

### *Procedure after the Berlin Visit*

M. LAVAL then turned to the question of procedure to be followed after the Berlin visit. He suggested that if Sir John Simon's soundings in Berlin were favourable, the further Anglo-French consultations now contemplated might perhaps be followed by a conference of representatives of Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Russia and Poland, though perhaps it was premature to think about this yet. In fact, such a conference would probably appeal to the Germans, who would naturally refuse to go straight back to the Disarmament Conference. There would be no harm in Sir John Simon sounding them on the point.

M. Laval said in conclusion that the most delicate point would be the figures of German armaments and the question of the French margin of superiority. It would be important not to allow the Germans to think they could get all that they wanted.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

### ANNEX<sup>9</sup>

#### *Draft Air Convention communicated by M. Laval*

(English Translation.)

The President of the German Reich, His Majesty the King of the Belgians, the President of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, His Majesty the King of Italy:

Considering the danger to the maintenance of peace and good understanding between the nations caused by the possibility of aerial attack between Germany, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Italy,

Desiring to avert this danger to the greatest possible extent by assuring effective assistance to any State which could be the object of such aerial attack,

Recognising that certain methods of aerial warfare render necessary especially prompt and powerful action in the form of counter-attack and reprisals, in order to assure the effective repression of all aggression committed by way of the air,

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 408.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. note 5 above.

Have resolved to conclude a treaty with this object, and have appointed as their plenipotentiaries:  
who, having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:—

#### ARTICLE 1

In the event of one of the high contracting parties being the object of unprovoked aggression, by way of the air, on the part of one of the States named in the preamble to the present treaty, the other high contracting parties undertake, as soon as requested by the party attacked, immediately to come to its assistance with their air forces.

By 'unprovoked aggression' in the sense of Section I above shall be understood all aerial attack other than action carried out in the cases provided for in article 2, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, of the general Treaty of Locarno, or in execution either of the commitments of guarantee and assistance described in articles 1, 4 and 5 of the said treaty, or of the commitments resulting from the present convention.

#### ARTICLE 2

While the assistance rendered in accordance with article 1 may not thereby be retarded or limited, the Council of the League of Nations shall be invited to examine the situation in order to exercise the powers conferred upon it by the Covenant of the League and the general Treaty of Locarno.

#### ARTICLE 3

The object of the present treaty being the better assurance of the maintenance of peace, the high contracting parties will make every endeavour to obtain that other Powers may undertake not to hinder its application.

#### ARTICLE 4

The technical arrangements governing the methods by which assistance shall be rendered shall be the object of bilateral agreements between the signatory Powers.

#### ARTICLE 5

[This article shall lay down the conditions of ratification and entry into force of the convention. It shall, in particular, make the entry into force dependent upon that of the general statements referred to in London.]

Three protocols shall be annexed to this convention:—

1. Anglo-Italian reservation.
2. Since Germany and Italy are to be parties to instruments relative to the maintenance of peace in Central Europe, the high contracting parties declare that the engagements resulting for them from the treaty of this day shall not *ipso facto* be applicable in the case of a conflict arising between Germany and Italy in consequence of their relations in that region.

3. Pending the entry into force of the convention, the signatory Powers shall recognise the right of any of them immediately to concert together, at will, by way of bilateral negotiations, in order to obtain mutual assurances of the guarantees provided by the convention for the period between its conclusion and coming into force.

*February 26, 1935.*

## No. 518

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*  
*No. 82 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1507/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 1, 1935, 7 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 30 of February 21st<sup>1</sup> and 31 Saving of February 26th.<sup>2</sup>

2. We are glad to learn that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are working on an alternative to the scheme of July last for an Eastern Pact, and we are interested to note that the scheme now proposed is designed on the same pattern as was suggested in our telegram No. 32,<sup>3</sup> namely the superimposition of a series of guarantee pacts on a system of non-aggression pacts. (Whereas we proposed to use existing pacts for this purpose, M. Bargeton's scheme contemplates the conclusion of a single new multilateral non-aggression pact).

3. The apparent weakness of M. Bargeton's scheme lies in the fact—as M. Léger seems to appreciate—that the suggested guarantee pacts are to be entirely facultative. This would probably in effect mean that the only parties who would negotiate such a pact would be France and Russia, thereby producing the appearance of a Franco-Russian alliance directed against Germany. In order to avoid this result would it not be possible for France to take the initiative of offering a guarantee treaty with Germany applicable to those aspects of the proposed non-aggression pact which are of particular interest to Germany, and so deprive Germany of the grievance that France was differentiating between her and Russia? Indeed, such a course would be nothing more than the application of the principle on which we insisted last July when we modified the original plan proposed by M. Barthou by persuading the French to agree that they should give the same guarantees to both Germany and Russia.<sup>4</sup> In the same way, if under M. Bargeton's scheme Russia is still to guarantee France in the west (and we assume that, though no reference was made to you by M. Bargeton of such a guarantee, it would be a natural *quid pro quo* in return for France guaranteeing the east), then according to our stipulations of last July, Russia ought to give Germany an equal guarantee.

4. If France in this manner gave a guarantee to both Russia and Germany and Russia gave identical guarantees to France and Germany in the west, it

<sup>1</sup> No. 482.

<sup>2</sup> No. 509.

<sup>3</sup> No. 468.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Volume VI, Nos. 487-9.



is not clear why the Franco-Russian agreement should, as M. Léger fears, have the appearance of being directed against Germany any more than would have been the case under the July scheme.

5. On the other hand we do not like M. Léger's suggestion that it will be impossible for France (or presumably Russia) to give Germany any guarantee unless the latter contracts some mutual guarantee obligations of her own. What would he consider the minimum obligation of this nature which Germany should have to assume in order to qualify for a French guarantee?

6. We agree with M. Léger as to the desirability of circumscribing any Franco-Russian agreement by making it part and parcel of some strictly regional arrangement. It is for this reason that we welcome the idea of an agreement which would be specifically limited to guaranteeing certain parts of the proposed multilateral non-aggression pact.

Could you pursue the conversation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the above lines.

Repeated to Berlin, Moscow, Warsaw and Rome.

#### No. 519

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 259 [C 1632/55/18]<sup>1</sup>*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 1, 1935*

Sir,

Certain remarks made by the Italian Ambassador to Sir R. Vansittart on Feb. 27th revealed some anxiety on the part of the Italian Govt. respecting my approaching visit to Berlin. The Ambassador said that the restoration of harmonious unity between Italy, France and the U.K. resulting from the Rome and London meetings was one of the most useful and promising achievements since the war, and that it was essential to maintain this unity in the future, as it was the surest guarantee for the maintenance of peace.

2. Sir R. Vansittart agreed but told the Ambassador he need not fear that Anglo-Italian relations would be at all impaired by the Berlin visit, which might possibly be the first step towards a general practical settlement to include features already approved and no doubt still desired by Signor Mussolini. Even if the German Government were in a mood which would yield nothing concrete at all, no harm would be done, for Germany had always alleged that she had not received equal treatment since other Governments interchanged visits while she received none. A refusal of the invitation by H.M.G. might have been used by the German Government to create a major grievance to the obscuring of the real issue. At worst our acceptance would remove this possibility while convincing our own public and others that every possibility of settlement had been explored.

<sup>1</sup> Only the approved draft of this despatch is preserved in Foreign Office archives.

Sir R. Vansittart drew the attention of the Ambassador and his Government to two considerations: that at best the visit might be useful and that at worst it would be wise. Signor Grandi agreed that this sentence clearly described the situation; he would report in this sense. Sir R. Vansittart could see no ground for the slightest disquiet since before the acceptance of the Berlin invitation it had been made clear that I should only visit Berlin to discuss the London communiqué as a whole. There was therefore no question of any one part being taken in hand to the exclusion or detriment of others. The Ambassador noted this assurance which he regarded as most satisfactory.

[I am, &c.,  
(for the Secretary of State)]  
C. W. BAXTER

**No. 520**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 2, 11.45 a.m.)*  
*No. 34 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1714/55/18]*

PARIS, March 2, 1935

Press of yesterday and to-day in referring to your visit to Paris is chiefly concerned with the lecture,<sup>1</sup> comments on which I am reporting by despatch.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Reports of your conversation with Monsieur Laval<sup>3</sup> occupy a secondary position and there has been no undesirable tendency to exaggerate its significance. It is generally assumed that complete identity of views exists between you and Monsieur Laval. As regards your visit to Berlin it is assumed to be of an exploratory nature. The two governments are held to be in entire agreement as to the indivisibility of the London proposals and the greatest confidence is expressed in yourself personally, the concluding words of your lecture having further strengthened French convictions of your attachment to close Franco-British co-operation in the cause of peace.

(3) The idea of a visit to Moscow is discussed calmly and without prejudice, opinion inclining to favour such a visit as a corollary to the visit to Berlin on the ground that the Eastern Pact cannot be settled without the Soviet.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 479, paragraph 4.

<sup>2</sup> In despatch No. 326 of March 1, not printed.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 517.

**No. 521**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 2, 12.29 p.m.)*

*No. 81 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1713/55/18]*

*Immediate*

**BERLIN, March 2, 1935**

Baron von Neurath has just rung me up to say that the following will be communiqué as issued to German press. He agreed however that the wording need not necessarily be identical in both countries:—

‘The British Government has informed the German Government that the visit of the British Foreign Secretary to Berlin will take place next week.

Sir John Simon will arrive on Thursday March 7th in the evening. The two following days will be devoted to the conversations as arranged.’

**No. 522**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Ovey (Brussels)*

*No. 18 Telegraphic [C 1510/55/18]*

**FOREIGN OFFICE, March 2, 1935, 3.50 p.m.**

Your telegram No. 8<sup>1</sup> raises two points:—

(1) The possibility that the violation of Dutch territory by the non-aggressor Powers acting under the Air Convention will oblige the Dutch to ask for aid from the aggressors;

(2) The new proposed system of ‘territorial air’.

As regards (1), the Dutch argument seems to ignore their position under the Covenant of the League and in particular the penultimate paragraph of Article 16, in which the members agree to ‘take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the members of the League, etc.’ I realize that in practice, for that provision to be applicable, it would be necessary

(a) that the Dutch Government should be satisfied that the original aggressor had resorted to war in disregard of its League commitments; and

(b) that the air forces which had crossed Dutch territory ‘should be co-operating to protect the Covenant of the League’, which would probably involve a recommendation by the Council under paragraph 2 of Article 16 as to the employment of those forces.

It is possible that, in the case of a flagrant aggression, within the meaning of the Locarno Treaty, or a sudden attack which would come under the provisions of the proposed Air Convention, Dutch territory would be violated in order to get at the aggressor before there had been time for both conditions (a) and (b) to be fulfilled. But that possibility does not affect the validity of the argument derived from the Covenant in so far as it shows that the Dutch contention based on the rules of neutrality is not necessarily correct.

<sup>1</sup> No. 500.

As regards (2), the proposal seems fantastic. It would certainly result in aerial combats above Dutch territory, since if the belligerent is to be entitled to fly over that territory the other must be allowed to intercept him. This could not be agreeable to the Netherlands Government or consistent with the idea of neutrality which the scheme is designed to foster.

It would moreover involve a change in the existing rules of neutrality which would require general international acceptance, and would be inconsistent with the terms of the Air Convention of October 13, 1919, in which the signatory Powers (including Holland) 'recognize that every Power has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the air space above its territory'.<sup>2</sup>

I need not discuss the particular objections which we should entertain to the proposal on strategic grounds and which would be raised by the removal of the buffer of Dutch neutrality. Arguments such as these would not be suitable for presentation either to the Netherlands or even to the Belgian Government.

Under this latter reserve you may speak to the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs informally on the above lines.<sup>3</sup>

Repeated to The Hague, Paris, Rome, Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> For the text and original signatories of this Air Convention see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 112, pp. 931-43; the accession of the Netherlands Government to the Convention was notified on August 22, 1928; see *ibid.*, vol. 128, p. 446.

<sup>3</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 4 of March 2 to The Hague authorized Sir H. Montgomery to speak in the sense of the above telegram if he were approached by his Belgian colleague or by the Netherlands Government.

## No. 523

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 5)*

*No. 34 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1734/55/18]*

PARIS, March 4, 1935

Your telegram No. 82 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

I have had a talk with M. Léger on the lines of your telegram under reference. He said that until the German reply to the French memorandum of January 15th on the Eastern Pact<sup>2</sup> was received, discussion of any alternative was more or less academic but if, as there was every reason to suppose, Germany definitely refused to accept any obligation of mutual automatic assistance, the French Government would have to do all they could to evolve some possible alternative, for the last thing they wanted was to be forced into a purely Franco-Russian agreement.

2. I put forward the suggestions in your telegram as a possible solution and M. Léger, while not accepting them there and then, did not turn them down categorically and indeed implied that something on those lines might provide a solution, though he thought it would be very difficult to get Russia

<sup>1</sup> No. 518.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 342, note 1.

to offer a unilateral guarantee to Germany. He also doubted whether Germany would accept unilateral guarantees from France and Russia, to which I replied that that did not detract from the advantage of making the offer. It would at least show the world at large that both France and Russia were genuine in their efforts to prevent the Eastern Pact from appearing to be directed against Germany.

Repeated to Berlin, Warsaw, Rome, and Moscow.

**No. 524**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 5, 12.19 p.m.)*

*No. 86 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1759/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, March 5, 1935

Baron von Neurath has just told me that the Chancellor has become suddenly quite hoarse having caught cold in the Saar.

I asked when the Chancellor could be expected to recover the use of his voice but His Excellency could not fix any date for your visit which to the German Government's great regret must be postponed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 517.

**No. 525**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 51 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1759/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 5, 1935, 1.17 p.m.

Please express to Baron von Neurath the regret with which we have learned of the Chancellor's indisposition and our hopes for his speedy recovery.

**No. 526**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 5, 4.50 p.m.)*

*No. 88 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1774/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, March 5, 1935

My telegram No. 86.<sup>1</sup>

Baron von Neurath's manner whilst informing me of Chancellor's illness seemed to me strangely awkward and perturbed. He left Chancellor to see me and my first impression was that the illness was a 'diplomatic one'. Since

<sup>1</sup> No. 524.

reading the German evening press this impression has grown into practically a conviction. I surmise that the Chancellor must have had a fit of rage on reading extracts from yesterday's white paper<sup>2</sup> and despite Baron von Neurath's efforts has decided that he would not receive you.

I know moreover that he was reading this morning's extracts from the white paper and other telegrams from London which also upset him.

Berlin in general is convinced that the illness is purely 'diplomatic' although from the Chancellor's 'entourage' I hear that he is really hoarse, though it is difficult to see why he should be unable to suggest a date by which he may be well enough to receive you.

<sup>2</sup> The *Statement Relating to Defence* issued in connexion with the *House of Commons Debate on March 11, 1935*, dated March 1 and initialled by J. R. M[acDonald], was issued as Cmd. 4827 on March 4 and published in full in *The Times* of March 5, p. 9.

### No. 527

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 5, 6.30 p.m.)*

*No. 91 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1777/55/18]*

*Immediate. Secret*

BERLIN, March 5, 1935

My telegram No. 77.<sup>1</sup>

I have good reason to believe that Chancellor did, as foreshadowed in the above, contemplate making an appeal to you for a direct Anglo-German understanding. Hence perhaps his special fury at White Paper.

He may of course recover his temper if not his voice and in that case we may expect a later date to be suggested for your visit. If not another moving appeal to France for a Franco-German understanding may be made before very long.

<sup>1</sup> No. 511.

### No. 528

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 6)*

*No. 37 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1807/55/18]*

PARIS, March 5, 1935

Almost all newspapers today comment on the British White Paper on Defence<sup>1</sup> which is welcomed for its categorical reference to German rearmament as the principal cause of the general feeling of insecurity. It is anticipated that its publication on the eve of your visit to Berlin will have come as a painful but wholesome surprise to Germany.

2. The Right press hopes that England's somewhat tardy example will open the eyes of M. Flandin to the urgent necessity of introducing two years

<sup>1</sup> See No. 526, note 2.

military service without further delay. Tribute is paid to the Prime Minister for his political courage in thus facing facts which must be profoundly distasteful to him.

## No. 529

*Record of a meeting held on March 4 between representatives of the Foreign Office and Service Departments to examine the French draft of the proposed Air Convention<sup>1</sup>*

[C 1794/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 5, 1935

The Draft Convention handed by M. Laval to the Secretary of State in Paris on Feb. 28th was examined at a meeting on March 4th by representatives of the Foreign Office and the Service Departments. As none of those present at the meeting had had the opportunity of studying this French Draft beforehand, the results of the meeting must be regarded as purely preliminary and not as representing the considered views of the Departments concerned. It was, however, necessary for the French Draft to be urgently considered in order that the Secretary of State should be fully advised, before his departure for Berlin on March 7th<sup>2</sup> with regard to any new and important points which might be contained therein.

### *Preamble*

It was agreed that the Preamble of the French Draft did not call for comment, except that the paragraph beginning with the words 'Recognising that certain methods' represented a wording which we had deliberately decided to avoid.

### *Article 1, Paragraph 1*

The important phrase in this paragraph consists of the words 'as soon as requested by the party attacked.' This phrase was, on the whole, undesirable from the point of view of H.M.G. It was true that the Belgian Government had in the past expressed a fear lest the guarantors of the Locarno Treaty might come to the assistance of Belgium even although Belgium had no wish to be assisted; and the Belgian Government therefore were known to be of the opinion that, under Locarno, no assistance should be rendered to the party attacked unless and until the party attacked requested such assistance. It was possible that, if Germany were guilty of an unprovoked air attack against Belgium, that country might even prefer to accept the situation and take no counter-measures, rather than be drawn into war. The words 'as soon as requested by the party attacked' might, therefore, have been inserted by the French to meet Belgium's views. But from the British point of view they weakened the all-important contention that it is necessary for the guarantor

<sup>1</sup> See Annex to No. 517.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 521.

State to decide for itself whether unprovoked aggression has taken place, and would reinforce the view that rendering of assistance should be automatic.

*Article 1, paragraph 2*

Here the French have attempted to define the words 'unprovoked aggression'. The intention was, as usual, to make the working of the Convention as 'automatic' as possible. The whole idea of attempting to define 'unprovoked aggression' seemed to be open to objection, as liable to give rise to endless difficulties, and as a dangerous indication whereby a would-be aggressor might evade the real intentions of the Convention. But it would not be easy to explain to the French Government exactly why their proposal was considered objectionable, since it may be claimed that it is only a reproduction of Art. 2 of Locarno. If it were explained to them that, in the British view, it was for every Government to decide for itself whether a case for action under the Treaty had taken place, the French Government would reply that even so it was most desirable that each Government should have the same agreed standard on which to base its decision. Further consideration would therefore have to be given to the practical effects of the attempted French definition. For example, if Germany were to attack Czechoslovakia, and France were to come to Czechoslovakia's assistance under their treaty of mutual guarantee, and if Germany were then to attack France by air, this would, apparently under the French definition, be 'unprovoked aggression' on the part of Germany against France, and if so, this would involve an extension of our Locarno guarantee to a case which it does not cover. This should afford an argument against the acceptance of this definition.

*Article 2*

This draft article is based chiefly on the Locarno Treaty, and the only words requiring consideration seem to be the words 'or limited'.

*Article 3*

It is not clear what the French object is in proposing this article. It may be aimed at the United States, and other powerful neutrals. Alternatively, the French may have Holland in mind, and Holland's obligations under Article 16 of the League Covenant. From the British point of view, the article seems fairly harmless, as it would impose on H.M.G. merely an obligation to 'make every endeavour' to persuade other Powers to do something, i.e. not a very extensive commitment.

*Article 4*

The whole idea of concerting plans in advance for rendering assistance under the Air Convention has from the beginning been considered by the competent Departments of H.M.G. to be open to the strongest objections. At the same time, it must be recognised that while if we are to assist Germany against France our operations can take place from this country, in the con-



trary event of our having to assist France against Germany we shall almost certainly have to make use of French aerodromes. There is, therefore, a case for maintaining that it is necessary for us to have some plans worked out as regards the purely technical arrangements which would be involved if we had to assist France against Germany. On the whole, however, it would probably be open to objection to have any such article in the Air Convention.

*Article 5*

No comments.

*Protocol 1*

No comments.

*Protocol 2*

The main object of this Protocol is to cover the commitments of France towards Italy. It requires no detailed consideration by H.M.G. at the present stage.

*Protocol 3*

This is M. Léger's idea, referred to in Paris telegram No. 29 of February 17.<sup>3</sup> It has already been decided that it is not acceptable to H.M.G.<sup>4</sup>

It was agreed that the French draft contained very little new material of value, while raising several points which were quite unacceptable to H.M. Govt.

The meeting then proceeded to discuss Sir W. Malkin's draft of February 27.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> No. 462.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 518.

<sup>5</sup> Not printed. No record of this part of the meeting has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

**No. 530**

*Letter from Sir R. Vansittart to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

[C 1834/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 5, 1935*

My dear Eric,

I have been thinking a lot about your private and secret telegram to me<sup>1</sup> in regard to Hitler's expression of a wish to meet me personally precisely because he had heard that I was opposed to him.

As a matter of fact of course, whenever the Secretary of State does go to Berlin (I hope it will not be long hence) it will not be possible for me to go too, for the good reason that, as you know, I cannot leave England at the same time as he. That, however, is rather beside the point, for even if I could

<sup>1</sup> No. 504.

come out and see you in a private capacity, for which owing to our relationship<sup>2</sup> the excuse would be obvious, I do not think that very much good would be achieved by this, and I will put it quite plainly why.

It has come to me, not only from you but now from many sources as well, that the Germans have a deep antipathy for me personally, and attribute to me personally any lack of success which may attend their efforts vis-à-vis this country. They say freely and violently that I am anti-German. Crawford of the 'Daily Mail' was telling me this in confidence only five minutes before I sat down to dictate you this letter. This is only one example. It is of course completely untrue. I am not anti-German in the least. I have always thought that Germany got far too rough usage at Versailles and have always wished to see minimised the imprudences then committed. But while I am not anti-German, I am pro-British, by which I mean pro-peace, and the whole of my attitude towards *recent* Germany—I emphasise that word *recent*—can be put in a nutshell. I consider that the military preparations, both material and moral, being made by Germany (and I need hardly tell you that I keep as close an account of them as is possible for any one man) far exceed in dimensions anything which could possibly or conceivably be necessary for internal consumption, that is for the maintenance of order, alone. If these warlike preparations of body and spirit and steel were changed, I should be the first to change also with a great sigh of relief. I should revert instantly to my old and very friendly feelings. But until those facts, and they *are* facts, are changed I am not going to have my attitude changed by words alone. Existing facts can only be changed by new and better facts, and so long as those in authority in Germany are not spiritually disposed to such a change, any conversation would be really a waste of time and would, I think, do little good; possibly it would even increase Germany's out-spoken ill-temper with me. I must however be prepared for such antipathy on their part, and (reluctantly) I am.

I have only inflicted this long letter upon you because I felt that it arose directly from your private telegram that I should make my feelings perfectly plain to you, and I think that I also owe it to you to be as plain spoken with you as this because these are not only my own feelings; they are the frame of mind and attitude which I expect from those who work with me in the Foreign Office. In a word, I expect them to be realists as I am, and there is no-one on whom I count more in this direction than yourself as you already know. I think that confidence is constantly and brilliantly borne out.

Of course if you disagree with my estimate of the utility or futility of my responding to this indirect invitation, I should be very interested in your comments.

Yours ever  
Van

<sup>2</sup> Lady Phipps and Lady Vansittart were sisters.

No. 531

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 6, 8.17 a.m.)*  
*No. 92 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1778/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, March 6, 1935

Storm over white paper<sup>1</sup> continues with growing force in last night's late editions and this morning's press.

Special prominence is given to Lord Snowden's attack on the government.<sup>2</sup>

I will telephone summary of press comment directly it is translated.

Please send me at once by air copies of the white paper.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See No. 526, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Sir E. Phipps's telegram No. 93, received by telephone at 9.58 a.m. on March 6, summarized German press comments. The *National Socialist Correspondentz* was quoted as stating: 'Even Lord Snowden had described the White Paper as the most tragic document since the war.' Lord Snowden, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1924 and 1929-31, and Lord Privy Seal, 1931-2, had made this remark to a *Manchester Guardian* reporter; see *Manchester Guardian*, March 5, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> Copies were sent under Foreign Office despatch No. 247 of March 6 to Berlin, not printed.

No. 532

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 6, 11.15 a.m.)*  
*Nos. 28 and 29 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1782/55/18]*

*Immediate*

VIENNA, March 6, 1935

Herr von Papen, whom I have just met at Federal Chancellor's, immediately broached subject of postponed Berlin visit.

He begged me to believe that Chancellor was really ill. They had had terrible weather during the visit to the Saar, had stood in pouring rain and had all been drenched to the skin. Herr von Papen said he was convinced that decision only meant a two days postponement.

I expressed my regret at Chancellor's indisposition in suitable terms and my hope that he would be quickly restored to health.

Referring to postponed visit Minister for Foreign Affairs declared his belief that . . . 'I would win through in the face of German manifestations.

Repeated to Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> The text is here uncertain.

No. 533

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 53 Telegraphic [C 1759/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 6, 1935, 3.50 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 86<sup>1</sup> and subsequent telegrams.

1. While regretting Chancellor's hoarseness and hoping that his voice will soon return, there is manifest inconvenience, in view of other engagements, in leaving date of postponed meeting unfixed for longer than is necessary. Please therefore ascertain, as soon as you think the moment opportune, what alternative dates might be suitable for fulfilling the engagement which the German Government invited me to make.

2. For your own information, we have decided on visits to Russia and Poland and these will probably be paid by Mr. Eden on behalf of His Majesty's Government. The announcement will necessarily be made almost immediately. You will appreciate that in view of the debate on the White Paper on Monday next<sup>2</sup> it will be necessary to be in a position to deal with the Berlin visit at latest by then.

3. I am being questioned about the Berlin visit in House of Commons today and my answer follows in my next telegram.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 524.

<sup>2</sup> March 11.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed. See 298 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 1949-50.

No. 534

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 6, 9.30 p.m.)*

*No. 95 Telegraphic [C 1809/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, *March 6, 1935, 9.4 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 53.<sup>1</sup>

I have not yet received your next telegram so do not know what your answer was in the House of Commons. Meanwhile it must be remembered that only yesterday Baron von Neurath was unable or unwilling to fix a date for meeting. If I approach him again so soon it will give the German Government the impression that we are running after them and that, in view of German mentality, would be undesirable.

Would it not be possible for you in a few days but as late as possible to remark casually to the German Ambassador that you presume that you will hear in due course when Chancellor is well enough to receive you?

The announcement of Mr. Eden's visits to Moscow and Warsaw may help to bring the Chancellor to reason though I cannot of course guarantee what effect any given move may produce on that unbalanced mind.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 533.

<sup>2</sup> In his immediately succeeding telegram, No. 96, telephoned at 9.30 a.m. on March 7, Sir E. Phipps said: 'Your answer in the House of Commons [cf. No. 533, note 3] seems quite

in accordance with already existing facts viz: that I asked Baron von Neurath when he told me of the Chancellor's illness at what date he thought the visit would be able to take place. We now await his reply.' In Foreign Office telegram No. 57 of March 8 Sir J. Simon referred to Berlin telegrams Nos. 95 and 96 and said: 'I agree—Nothing more seems possible for the moment.'

### No. 535

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 6, 10.37 p.m.)*

*No. 94 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1780/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, March 6, 1935

My telegram No. 91.<sup>1</sup>

There is no actual indication, beyond a certain largeness of headlines, that German press consider postponement of your visit to be due to the White Paper. The door is therefore open for visit to take place at a later date if we still wish it. In these circumstances it may be advisable for His Majesty's Government to continue to take the Chancellor's illness at its face value provided the attitude of British and foreign press do not render this course impossible.

The debate on Monday<sup>2</sup> may, like that in November,<sup>3</sup> perhaps prove less disagreeable than the Chancellor expects, may clear the air and may give him an opportunity of recovering next week from the 'hoarseness' which now prevents him from receiving you.<sup>4</sup> Time works for reason and even now the Chancellor may be worrying over the possibility of your proceeding to Moscow without coming to Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> No. 527.

<sup>2</sup> March 11.

<sup>3</sup> On November 28, 1934; cf. No. 235.

<sup>4</sup> In the course of minutes on this telegram Mr. Sargent remarked on March 6: 'Last November the Germans did not expect anything from us, whereas now they had been buoyed up to hope for an early Anglo-German agreement. . . .' Sir R. Vansittart wrote on March 7: 'All this is a far more overt German interference in British internal politics than anything that the Soviets have done. The desire to feed the opposition and weaken the present Govt.—on very thin pretexts—is plain to all with open eyes. . . .'

### No. 536

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 7, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 39 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1812/55/18]*

PARIS, March 6, 1935

As M. Laval is away in the country, I asked M. Léger this afternoon if he had any news from Berlin. He read to me M. François-Poncet's latest telegram which was very much the same as the report of the 'Times' correspondent in this morning's issue.<sup>1</sup> M. François-Poncet said that the

<sup>1</sup> See *The Times*, March 6, p. 14.

conviction of the diplomatic nature of Herr Hitler's illness was becoming more and more pronounced.<sup>2</sup>

2. Speaking privately and unofficially, M. Léger seemed to think that the circumstances of the postponed visit might necessitate further consultation between London and Paris.

<sup>2</sup> In his telegram No. 36, telephoned at 4.20 p.m. on March 6, Sir G. Clerk said that this view was widely held in the French press and that further consideration in the press of the White Paper 'only confirms the favourable impression which it has created here'.

### No. 537

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 7, 10 a.m.)*

*No. 51 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1815/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 6, 1935

As in the case of Germany's departure from the League the German Foreign Office were completely taken by surprise by the Chancellor's sudden illness. This being the morning after, it is probable that Dr. Schacht, General von Blomberg and other influential members of the Cabinet will have something to say to Hitler from their respective standpoints. He returned it seems in a high state of exaltation from the Saar and acted, as a high official remarked gloomily, in a manner reminiscent of the Kaiser.

So far strict censorship is being exercised and German correspondents abroad are not allowed to telegraph the repercussions in foreign countries, so that the country at large still takes the Chancellor's illness as genuine.

### No. 538

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 7)*

*No. 53 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1835/55/18]*

*Confidential*

BERLIN, March 6, 1935

Following is from an authoritative source. Herr von Ribbentrop admits in confidence that Herr Hitler's malady is half throat and half white paper. German officials are, he says, surprised at violent repercussion in foreign press and evidently taken aback by jubilation in Paris and elsewhere.

They maintain that your visit has not been cancelled but merely postponed and that Chancellor is free to renew the invitation on recovery. Herr von Ribbentrop has evidently had a rough time as Chancellor blamed him for misleading him to some extent by championing English visit and insisting that a desire for 'rapprochement' existed on English side.

Chancellor is now he says unapproachable on the whole business. Though there was nothing new in the white paper his feelings are deeply hurt by date chosen for publication.

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 9)*

*No. 143 [C 1916/55/18]*

BRUSSELS, March 6, 1935

Sir,

With reference to your telegram No. 18<sup>1</sup> of the 2nd. instant on the subject of two points raised by the Netherlands Government regarding respectively the operation of the proposed air convention and the suggested institution of a system of 'territorial air', I thought it best as the *démarche* had been made through the intermediary of Baron van Zuylen to reply through the same channel. Mr. MacKillop<sup>2</sup> therefore called on Baron van Zuylen and gave to him orally the substance of your telegram under reference.

2. Baron van Zuylen was greatly impressed by the force of the objections raised to the various arguments advanced by the Netherlands Government. He however suggested two observations which, in his purely private opinion, might present themselves to the Dutch if the matter were pursued further.

3. As regards the first point discussed in your telegram No. 18, Baron van Zuylen feared that the Netherlands Government, if and when the case arose and their obligations under the League of Nations were invoked, would shelter themselves behind the probable absence of a unanimous decision on the part of the Council of the League and would say that, unless and until such a decision had been taken, their duty as a neutral State would be paramount.

4. As regards your first objection to the proposed system of territorial air, he thought that the Dutch might view with relative unconcern the possibility of an aerial battle far above their territory if they were able to avoid giving free passage to land forces.

5. What Baron van Zuylen was inclined to consider the most significant feature of the Dutch proposals was that they clearly demonstrated a desire on the part of the Netherlands Government for a change in the existing rules of neutrality. He was thus particularly glad to hear the point made that any such change would require general international acceptance.

6. I doubt whether Monsieur Hymans when I next see him will, with his experience of the inutility of prematurely dealing with the hypothetical, have much to add at this juncture.

7. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Minister at The Hague.

I have, &c.,  
ESMOND OVEY

<sup>1</sup> No. 522.

<sup>2</sup> First Secretary in H.M. Embassy at Brussels.

No. 540

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent*<sup>1</sup>  
[C 1872/55/18]

BERLIN, March 6, 1935

My dear Sargent,

The French Ambassador came to see me yesterday and told me that on March 1st he had a long conversation with Ribbentrop, which he had not told me of sooner out of a feeling of delicacy just before Sir John's visit to Berlin. Now that the visit was postponed he could tell me.

Briefly, it seems that Ribbentrop adopted a very haughty, not to say brutal, attitude towards François-Poncet, complaining bitterly of French unreasonableness and of the fact that the Ambassador prevented him (Ribbentrop) and Hess from going to Paris some time ago in order to work for a Franco-German rapprochement.<sup>2</sup> R. added, I believe, that the French Government were hopeless and hinted that Germany would not make any further overtures to them.

This is dictated just as the bag leaves, but perhaps you will obtain the gist of François-Poncet's report to his Government from the French Embassy.<sup>3</sup>

Yours ever,

ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>1</sup> Filed in the Foreign Office on March 8.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 244.

<sup>3</sup> No relevant document has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

No. 541

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 8, 5 p.m.)*  
*No. 57 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1918/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 7, 1935

I learn from a reliable source that officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs are delighted with latest development partly because they resisted proposal to send invitation in the first instance and partly because they do not believe in possibility of separating England from France or coming to a direct agreement with England.

Their attitude towards a general convention is purely negative. They maintain that Germany's policy should henceforth be to gain time, to encourage France to procrastinate, and to avoid being drawn into discussion which if successful can only end in hampering Germany's freedom in some direction. Having got through the danger zone Germany, they think, should avoid committing herself until she has recovered her strength and is in a position to cope with any situation which might arise out of her attitude on any given point.



As for the Chancellor he is confirmed in his view that his cold was a timely one by the echo in England particularly the behaviour of House of Commons. He feared a concentrated attack on him in British press and Parliament instead of which, as he remarked, the parliamentary system ran true to form, i.e., the parties attacked each other just as they formerly did in Germany instead of concentrating on the enemy.

His visit to the Saar has strengthened his conviction that his mission as Germany's leader is a providential one. Neither Buerckel nor anyone else could explain satisfactorily to him how the Saar came to vote 90% for him and Herr Hitler observed that he had never at any time anywhere experienced such an enthusiastic popular demonstration as in the recovered territory.

Italian Ambassador tells me that Herr von Bülow remarked to him last night that it was a good thing your visit had been postponed as it had not been sufficiently prepared diplomatically. After that had been carefully done, he indicated that the visit might take place. If by 'diplomatic preparation' Herr von Bülow contemplates a mere repetition of negative and cynical attitude described in my telegram No. 21<sup>1</sup> it bodes ill for success of your visit if and when it takes place. It seems that he referred to the failure of the Venice meeting.<sup>2</sup>

Italian Ambassador hears that some leading German has just declared to a special correspondent of the 'Journal' that Germany means eventually to have an army of 500,000 men, this being necessary as, unlike the French, she has no trained reserves.

Italian Ambassador heard in Rome, where he has just been, that it was thought that some arrangement had been concluded between Germany and Poland whereby Danzig, after approaching elections, should be granted a plebiscite, which would almost certainly decide for reunion with Germany. East Prussia would then be linked up with the Fatherland, and a small corridor would in its turn run from Poland proper to Gdynia: Poland to receive certain compensations unspecified. His Excellency admitted, however, that this information was vague.

<sup>1</sup> No. 347.

<sup>2</sup> Herr Hitler visited Venice from June 14-16, 1934; see Volume VI, No. 462, and *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 5.

## No. 542

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 8, 5 p.m.)*  
*No. 58 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1919/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 7, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

French Ambassador has just seen Herr von Buelow (at 6 p.m.) and found him much more reasonable than did Italian Ambassador last night. (It is

<sup>1</sup> No. 541.

noteworthy that of late the Italians have been most consistently pessimistic and anti-German).

Herr von Buelow told my French colleague that there was no reason why your visit should not take place in a week or ten days and perhaps even combined with one to Warsaw and Moscow.

**No. 543**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 8, 6 p.m.)*

*No. 59 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1920/55/18]*

*Confidential*

BERLIN, March 7, 1935

I learn from a perfectly trustworthy source that German 'disarmament' expert in Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives following details regarding German re-armament position.

Within a month Germany expects to be stronger in the air than France. Within a year she should be stronger on land than France.

She will not be content with the same military strength as French but will demand a strength proportionate to her population. Thus if France demands one man per 100 of her population Germany will demand *gleichberechtigung* or one man per 100 also.

Germany's final departure from the League will fall due in October. She will not return before then and if she returns later she will only do so on very stiff terms.

The German expert expressed intense surprise that France had allowed Germany to get so strong.

**No. 544**

*Sir H. Montgomery (The Hague) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 8)*

*No. 5 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1899/55/18]*

THE HAGUE, March 7, 1935

Your telegram No. 4.<sup>1</sup>

Belgian Minister came to see me today; he said his Government had instructed him to ask me whether Minister for Foreign Affairs had spoken to me in same sense as he had to him.<sup>2</sup>

2. Monsieur Maskens then related to me his interview with Dr. de Graeff much in the terms of Sir E. Ovey's telegram No. 8<sup>3</sup> but his rather fuller account brought out, more clearly as regards first point, extent to which position of Netherlands, if they were not parties to air pact, was exercising the minds of Netherlands Government in view particularly of their moral position if in the hypothetical case quoted they had (under their conception of their own obligations) to take sides with the original aggressor.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 522, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 500, last paragraph.

<sup>3</sup> No. 500.

3. As regards second point (territorial air) Monsieur Maskens dwelt on fact that Minister for Foreign Affairs' remarks represented 'personal reflection' which had not been fully explored by the Government; this was borne out by the fact that he drew a parallel between the upper air and the high seas which was obviously not a parallel at all.

4. I told Belgian Minister that what Dr. de Graeff had said to him on the first point corresponded generally with what the latter had said to me in two informal conversations (see my letters to Sir R. Vansittart of February 5th and February 12th)<sup>4</sup> which had left me under the impression that Netherlands Government were inclined to the view that they should be parties to proposed convention if invited, subject to views of States General.

As regards hypothetical case quoted I spoke to Monsieur Maskens in the sense of paragraphs 2 and 3 of your telegram No. 18<sup>5</sup> to Brussels.

I said that if, but only if, Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to the question again I should speak to him in the same sense. As regards general question I said I believed His Majesty's Government had not yet considered the question with him or otherwise of Dutch participation, and that in any case some formal indication of Netherlands Government's wishes would be necessary preliminary to any invitation. On this also I should, subject to further instructions from London, say nothing further to Dr. de Graeff unless he re-opened the question with me.

As regards 'territorial air' I told Belgian Minister that Dr. de Graeff had not raised this point with me at all. If he did I was authorised to pour as much cold water on it as possible on lines of paragraphs 4 and 5 of your telegram to Brussels No. 18<sup>5</sup> of substance of which paragraphs I informed M. Maskens. He touched on objections on strategical grounds (see paragraph 6 of your telegram)<sup>5</sup> but I made no comment.

Repeated to Brussels.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 418. Sir H. Montgomery's letter of February 12 is not printed.

<sup>5</sup> No. 522.

## No. 545

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 501 [C 1724/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 7, 1935*

Sir,

Captain McEwen, M.P.,<sup>1</sup> called on Mr. Eden on February 27th to report a conversation which he had had with M. Flandin when in Paris the previous weekend.

2. Captain McEwen, who has known M. Flandin personally for many years, thought that the French Prime Minister was much less buoyant than was his wont. M. Flandin seemed depressed both by the internal political

<sup>1</sup> Member of Parliament for Berwick.

conditions in France, and by the attitude of Germany. The latter country was now, M. Flandin said, 60% re-armed, and was once again a very formidable military Power: Junkers were now turning out 14 aeroplanes a day, and the German Government had been at their old game of suggesting to the French Government conversations *à deux*, assuring the French Ministers that they would find it much easier to get on with them alone and without H.M.G. in the U.K. M. Flandin was fearful lest Herr Hitler should before long reach the stage arrived at sooner or later by every Dictator when he had to make war. Signor Mussolini had reached that stage now, as his Abyssinian adventures showed.<sup>2</sup>

3. M. Flandin also mentioned that the German Government had been suggesting once again that their colonial aspirations could be met if they were given the Portuguese colonies in East Africa, to begin with and then, at a later date, no doubt they might also have Angola.

4. I am sending a copy of this despatch to H.M. Ambassador at Berlin.

I am, &c.,

(for the Secretary of State)

R. F. WIGRAM

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 495, note 2.

## No. 546

*Letter from Mr. Sargent to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

[F.O. 800/275]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 7, 1935*

My dear Eric,

You have given us an admirable picture from the German end of what you describe as the White Paper racket. Let me see if I can, in answer to your letter of the 6th March,<sup>1</sup> give you a similar picture from the English end.

In the first place, as you no doubt realise, the White Paper was not a sudden brain wave. It is the result of long departmental and ministerial cogitations, reaching back over a period of several months. Once the Cabinet had decided that the time had come to abandon the policy of under-arming this country, which has been pursued for the last 17 years, it was agreed that such a momentous change warranted some departure from the ordinary parliamentary procedure, and that therefore this year's increased estimates should be accompanied by a special White Paper explaining the reasons why H.M. Government have found it necessary to make this fundamental change

<sup>1</sup> In this letter to Mr. Sargent, not printed, Sir E. Phipps said: 'I cannot add anything to my already too swollen stream of telegrams about the White Paper racket! If you can from time to time let me have a very private line to let me know what attitude (if any) is adopted by the powers that be towards German questions in general or my poor self in particular I should be eternally grateful. When one lives in a madhouse outside views, impressions and hints are enormously helpful, not to say indispensable, and I never get any here.'

in their armament policy.<sup>2</sup> Long before the Berlin visit had been thought of, and still less fixed, the parliamentary timetable had had to be arranged and the date for the introduction of the Service estimates settled. In any case it would have been impossible to alter the parliamentary timetable merely because of the Berlin visit. As the Estimates debate was to take place on the 11th [of March] it was inevitable that the White Paper should appear the week before. The only question was whether the White Paper should or could be modified in view of the impending Berlin visit. The Cabinet considered this last week, and while realising that from the F[oreign] O[ffice] point of view the references to Germany might cause trouble at this particular juncture, they decided that from the parliamentary point of view the references were essential and must stand (particularly as they contained nothing which was not in Mr. Baldwin's speech of November 28th<sup>3</sup> beyond the reference to the training of the youth and the non-condonation of Germany's violation of Part V.

The German reaction, therefore, to the White Paper did not come as a surprise, though no doubt we had not expected that Hitler's tantrums would take the precise form that they have taken. Van<sup>4</sup> thought the German Ambassador might come down here, but not much more. I won't, of course, disguise the fact that our idealists and unrealists have been badly shaken, but the Cabinet as a whole is quite sound and not in the least perturbed by this latest manoeuvre of Hitler's. If Hitler thinks that the debate on Monday<sup>5</sup> is going to justify him and weaken the Government he is likely to be disappointed. The Opposition's business is, of course, to oppose, but it is improbable that Naziism will find very ardent supporters among the Labour Party. It is a sign of the way the wind is blowing that Henderson<sup>6</sup> should have definitely rejected a proposal that he should take this opportunity to resign from the chairmanship of the Disarmament Conference. Of course we have got our Rothermeres and Lothians<sup>7</sup> always with us, and we must expect them to make as much mischief as possible, but on the whole the press is taking things calmly and the first excitement is already dying down. I don't want to suggest that the estimates are not going to produce any criticism in Parliament, but I am inclined to think that this criticism will represent the point of view of the economists, the pacifists, and the taxpayers rather than that of House of Commons experts on foreign affairs, though it will doubtless be sought—dishonestly—to confuse the issue by the injection of the latter.

Van adds that this move of Hitler's is really a more overt attempt to interfere in the internal policies of this country than anything the Soviets have done;<sup>8</sup> and several members of the Cabinet already appreciate this attempt

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 340, note 4.

<sup>4</sup> Sir R. Vansittart.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Arthur Henderson.

<sup>7</sup> For earlier references to the attitude towards Germany of Lord Rothermere and Lord Lothian see, e.g., Nos. 294 and 391.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 535, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> See 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 872–85.

<sup>5</sup> March 11.

to feed the opposition. He adds that in general the Cabinet are chiefly concerned with the reaction about the Estimates and very little about the German tantrum. It had however often been pointed out and realised that any addition to the estimates was bound to create a storm and that this must in any case be faced and surmounted on account of our own growing needs. In a word, what we said via S[tanley] B[aldwin] to the Germans in November we are now saying via the White Paper to our own people. That is all.

Van hopes and believes that the Government will be very firm and tranquil on Monday—that is certainly the spirit of S.B., who is to open the debate (the P[rime] M[inister] is not going to speak, the S[ecretary] of S[tate] is to wind up), and that the *German* aspect of the question will prove to be a small storm in a teacup. The estimates are another matter, and we can only hope that the Germans will be disappointed in their expectation of seeing here a Government with *no* estimates and much naïveté.

The City, as you see, has been very nervous and disturbed for some days past, but here again it would be unwise to attribute this to the postponement of the Berlin visit. What has upset the City is not the White Paper, but the continued fall of sterling which preceded it. This continued fall is not due to British anxiety as regards the foreign policy of H.M. Government, but to the backwash of the panic into which foreigners were recently thrown by Rothermere's scandalous reports of an early general election and the consequent advent of a Socialist Government in this country.<sup>9</sup>

And now to turn to personal matters. I can't tell you how much I appreciated, dear Eric, your and Frances's invitation that I should stay at the Embassy during 'The Visit'. What had been an official corvée was thereby at once converted into a personal pleasure. I still hope that Hitler may allow me to avail myself of your charming hospitality.

Meanwhile let me know if there are any other points on which you would like further sidelights from Downing Street and I will try to produce the necessary discreet illumination.

Many thanks for the Angriff.<sup>10</sup> In return I send you an account of what the French Embassy have been telling us.<sup>11</sup> Do you concur in François-Poncet's estimate of what has been going on behind the scenes?<sup>12</sup>

O. G. SARGENT

P.S. The Secretary of State last week, under the influence of Lothian, was playing with the attractive idea of bringing off some sort of Anglo-German agreement. Visions of 'Peace with Honour' are apt to float before the eyes of English politicians when they think of Berlin,<sup>13</sup> but this particular vision

<sup>9</sup> Cf. No. 294.

<sup>10</sup> A copy of *Der Angriff* of March 5, containing comments on the White Paper and the postponement of Sir J. Simon's visit to Berlin, had evidently been sent to Mr. Sargent. Cf. *The Times*, March 6, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> This communication has not been traced in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. No. 540.

<sup>13</sup> A reference to the Earl of Beaconsfield's declaration in July 1878 after the Congress of Berlin that he had brought back 'Peace with Honour'.

has, I suspect, now been effectively blown away by the cold blast of the Führer's displeasure. It's an ill wind etc.

O. G. S.

**No. 547**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 8, 1.40 p.m.)*

*No. 98 Telegraphic [C 1893/55/18]*

*Confidential*

BERLIN, March 8, 1935, 1.27 p.m.

No wonder Herr von Ribbentrop regrets more than anybody postponement of your visit. I hear on good authority that it had been indicated to him that if the visit was a success, viz., if it resulted in a separate Anglo-German understanding he would have been appointed Ambassador in London (it seems he complained that Herr von Hoesch did not support him sufficiently when last he was there). Herr von Buelow would have retired and Herr Dieckhoff, a relative of Herr von Ribbentrop would have replaced von Buelow as Secretary of State.

It is clear that the Chancellor placed absurdly high hopes on the visit (not shared by Baron von Neurath) owing to Herr von Ribbentrop's glowing account of pro-German opinion in England and perhaps also owing to recent messengers of peace from there. His anger at the White Paper is therefore comprehensible but it is perhaps better that it should have burst out before your visit rather than during or after it.

**No. 548**

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Torr (Riga)*

*No. 69 [C 1725/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 8, 1935

Sir,

The Lithuanian Minister called under instructions from his Government on March 1st and left with Sir Lancelot Oliphant<sup>1</sup> a memorandum, of which I enclose a copy.

2. The document as originally drafted appeared to contain a request to be informed of impending action. When Sir L. Oliphant asked whether this was the case, the Minister explained that the whole memorandum was really more in the nature of a pious hope that the Eastern Pact would not be lost sight of in any eventual discussions.

3. M. Balutis said that the Quai d'Orsay were being handed a similar memorandum, in which the concurrence of the Estonian and Latvian Governments had already been obtained.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>1</sup> An Assistant Under Secretary of State.

ENCLOSURE IN No. 548

*Memorandum communicated by the Lithuanian Minister*

LONDON, *March 1, 1935*

The Lithuanian Government, animated by the desire to strengthen the guarantees of peace and security in Europe, and being of opinion that the creation of an atmosphere of mutual confidence in international relations would greatly contribute to that end, have heartily welcomed the outcome of the Anglo-French conversations held in London on February 1st-3rd, 1935, as indicated in the Joint Communiqué of the said Governments.<sup>2</sup>

2. The Lithuanian Government, who have repeatedly expressed themselves as in favour of the proposed Eastern Pact of Mutual Assistance, welcome the London Agreement, especially because it proposes the conclusion of the pact freely negotiated between all the parties interested and thus assuring to all of them mutual assistance.

The Lithuanian Government, appreciating the necessity for security, would be happy to think that all the measures for assurance of peace in Europe, such as are enumerated in the above-mentioned London Agreement, including the conclusion of the Eastern Pact, will be deemed to be an equally important and indispensable part of a whole.

<sup>2</sup> See Annex to No. 400.

**No. 549**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 9, 12.22 p.m.)*

*No. 102 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 1922/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, *March 9, 1935*

Baron von Neurath tells me that the Chancellor's throat is no better. He will begin tomorrow or the next day a fortnight's cure in a south German watering place. This morning he attended the funeral of Herr Schemm<sup>1</sup> at Beyrouth but only that part of the ceremony which took place indoors.

Baron von Neurath proposes provisionally and subject to the Chancellor's recovery, that your visit here should take place in the week between March 24th and March 30th. Programme of the visit would stand as arranged.

An announcement on the lines of the first paragraph above will appear in this evening's German press.

<sup>1</sup> Herr Hans Schemm had been Minister of Education and Public Worship in the Bavarian Government.



*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 9, 4.40 p.m.)*

*No. 104 Telegraphic [C 1924/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 9, 1935, 4.14 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Baron von Neurath tells me he received yesterday French and Italian replies regarding Danubian pact.<sup>2</sup> His first impression is that those replies are evasive, will require very careful study and do not bring things much nearer to a solution. He quoted as a special example the case of 'non interference' and difficulty of defining what is meant thereby and he cited a recent reply of yours to a Parliamentary question regarding events in Vienna in February 1934<sup>3</sup> and also the recent Austrian complaint regarding the Chancellor's Saarbrücken speech and private conversation with Major Hennessy.<sup>4</sup> He declared incidentally that he had refused to pay any attention to that complaint which he considered unfounded. The replies to the other four German questions were equally vague. If any practical result were desired it would be necessary to draw up Danubian pact in a far more concrete manner.

Regarding Eastern Pact His Excellency declined to budge from his negative attitude.

As for armament convention Baron von Neurath merely restated his opinion that none would be possible but that the German Government would carefully consider any proposals made by you. He does not think a limitation of effectives will be possible. In any case Germany now has not only France but also Russia to consider. He reiterated that Germany did not dream of attacking the latter Power but must have a strong army for defensive purposes.

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Moscow, Vienna and Warsaw.

<sup>1</sup> No. 551 below. These telegrams were despatched in reverse order.

<sup>2</sup> English translations of the French and Italian replies to the German memorandum of January 27 (cf. No. 394) are printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 518 and 520 respectively.

<sup>3</sup> A reference presumably to Sir J. Simon's statement on March 6 that he had no reason to doubt that the Austrian Government appreciated 'the interest shown by British public opinion' in the treatment of Socialists in Austria; see 298 *H.C. Debs.* 5 s., col. 1919.

<sup>4</sup> The references were to Herr Hitler's speech at Saarbrücken on March 1 (see *Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, vol. ii, pp. 1206-7) and to his alleged private conversation with Major G. R. Hennessy, who had been Chief Commissioner of the Volunteer Police in the Saar. For the German Government's reply to the Austrian Government's complaint of 'inadmissible interference on the part of Germany in Austrian internal affairs', see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 524.

No. 551

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 9, 4.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 103 Telegraphic [C 1923/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, March 9, 1935, 4.20 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of a most friendly conversation Baron von Neurath told me he must admit that German Government had been greatly upset over the White Paper on account of (A) time chosen for its publication and, (B) fact that Germany was indicated as the chief criminal.

In regard to (A) I pointed out that the White Paper had been drafted weeks ago in the ordinary official course and that its publication shortly before the debate was the necessary explanation of increase in our armaments. Only alternatives therefore open for . . .<sup>2</sup> of publication, were before, during or just after your visit. Of those three the first alternative appeared to be the fairest and most above-board.

In regard to (B) I pointed out that there was nothing very new or sensational in the facts adduced, which indeed were not disputed, and that moreover other Powers such as Russia and the United States had been definitely mentioned. His Excellency remarked that one reason why Germany had had to begin re-arming last year was the huge increase in Russian re-armament.

I then remarked that Baron von Neurath knew England much too well not to realise that the line taken up by the opposition was due to their desire effectually to 'oppose' His Majesty's Government rather than to any warm feelings towards Herr Hitler and the Nazis. His Excellency cordially agreed and remarked that the last thing the German Government wished to see was any change of government in Great Britain.

<sup>1</sup> No. 549.

<sup>2</sup> The text is here uncertain.

No. 552

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 15)*  
*No. 110 [N 1313/53/38]*

*Confidential*

MOSCOW, March 9, 1935

Sir,

I found Sir George Clerk's telegram to you, No. 31 Saving<sup>1</sup> of February 26th of particular interest, because it throws some light on a problem I have always found difficult to solve, namely, what it is that France hopes to gain by an alliance with the Soviet Union. But I confess that even now it is not entirely clear to me what the French General Staff have in mind. They hold,

<sup>1</sup> No. 509.

according to Sir George Clerk's telegram, that 'it would be invaluable to France to have Russia's vast industrial resources at her disposal'. As far as I can see this can mean one of two things. Either the French expect the Russians to export to them large quantities of aeroplanes in time of war, or they are counting on Russia's potential output *for herself* being so great that she could attack Germany at the same time as she is defending her Eastern front.

2. I have commented on the first of these two hypotheses in my telegram No. 21<sup>2</sup> of March 1st, and have given reasons for thinking that if this is what the French have in mind, their expectations in this respect may be exaggerated: and in this connexion I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copies of a memorandum by the Air Attaché to this Embassy,<sup>2</sup> whose views on this question I share. His opinion is that the Soviet aircraft industry is not at present capable of sudden expansion to meet war needs: and he points out that this factor must be considered under either hypothesis.

3. There is the further difficulty, if it is *export* of aircraft that the French General Staff have in mind, of communications with this country, which are as difficult as ever they were. But the feasibility of such communications depends to a large extent on questions of sea-power, on which I am not competent to express an opinion.

4. Finally, it may well be doubted whether the Soviet Government would be willing to place 'Russia's vast industrial resources' at France's disposal if the U.S.S.R. were also a belligerent and liable in certain circumstances to have to put the Red Army, Fleet and Air Forces to the test against the Germans, to say nothing of the Japanese.

5. It remains to consider the other hypothesis, namely, that what the French have in mind is that Russia's great industrial development will enable her to sustain a campaign against Germany while continuing to maintain her position in the Far East. The Italian Ambassador here recently informed me confidentially that, according to information on which he could rely, the French believe that the Soviet Government have resigned themselves to a possible ultimate loss of their Far Eastern Province, and that in spite of all their clamour of the necessity of defending themselves against Japanese aggression—'of not letting one pig's snout into the Soviet garden'—they would *not* throw their whole force to the east, but would leave General Blücher's army to do its best there (and by all accounts it will soon be in a position to put up a stubborn resistance without supplies from the West). Signor Attolico believes that the real danger which they apprehend, and which they are prepared to face in fullest strength, is the 'inevitable German expansion' towards the Baltic States. Personally, I find it hard to conceive that this country could or ever would attack Germany at the same time as she is defending her Eastern front; her whole present policy of pacts seems to be designed to neutralise her Western front while engaged in the East; and my conception of M. Litvinov's demand for 'immediate mutual assistance' is solely that France (and Czechoslovakia) should prevent Germany from

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

attacking Russia (with or without Polish assistance) when Russia is engaged with Japan, and that he has no idea, really, of the Red Army ever marching, or the Red Air Forces ever flying, against Germany for the sake of France. A Russian air attack upon Germany implies, I presume, a violation of Poland or the Baltic States. I can hardly conceive of Poland joining in the attack, or that the French can feel so sure, nowadays, of the Polish alliance as to expect Poland to be at war with Germany, with whom moreover she now has a pact. Possibly she might be forced into the war: but as the Polish Ambassador here said to me recently, his country dreads the idea of either Russian or German troops in her territory. History gives her sufficient recollections of being a battlefield.

6. I thus find it difficult to see, even on the second hypothesis, that France has much to hope from this country and from its industrial resources in the case of a German attack on France.

I have, &c.,  
CHILSTON

No. 553

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon*  
*No. 111 [N 1314/135/38]*

MOSCOW, March 9, 1935

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copies of a record<sup>1</sup> of a conversation between the Estonian Minister here, M. Tofer, and the Air Attaché to this Embassy, on Soviet foreign policy and the general situation in the Soviet Union. M. Tofer is generally supposed to be well-informed, but he is not usually very communicative: and if he is disposed to open his heart to my Air Attaché I have no objection to make.

2. It so happened that M. Baltrusaitis, the Lithuanian Minister here, came to see me a few days after M. Tofer's conversation with Wing Commander Collier: and it was interesting to note that on many points his views were diametrically opposed to those of M. Tofer. The latter, for instance, believes that Communist world-propaganda is still a danger: M. Baltrusaitis, on the other hand, is convinced that all idea of raising world revolution has been renounced for ever, chiefly because of the egregious failure of Communist Parties abroad (e.g. in Italy, Germany and Spain), and that Russia is no longer a danger to the world. M. Tofer fears the Russians *et dona ferentes*, and believes that 'once they get into your country they never get out'; M. Baltrusaitis expressed to me the view that if the Russians came into his country in the execution of a mutual assistance guarantee and to defend it against Germany, 'they would not stay: they would go out again afterwards'.

<sup>1</sup>Not printed.

3. This marked difference of opinion between two reasonably intelligent men, both of them well placed for observing this country's policy, is perhaps not so very difficult to explain. Lithuania has no common frontier with the Soviet Union, and is almost surrounded by Germany and Poland, with each of whom she has a serious dispute: Estonia is the farthest from Germany of the Baltic States, and therefore the most apprehensive about Russia. Their respective attitudes to the Eastern Pact proposals illustrated this: only Lithuania was at all keen about it: I fancy the other two were afraid of it but feared to reject it. The news of Soviet friendship for Lithuania contained in your despatches No. 60<sup>1</sup> of the 6th February and No. 78<sup>1</sup> of the 19th February was therefore not surprising.

4. M. Baltrusaitis could not tell me whether, in the event of Germany and Poland refusing the Eastern Pact, M. Litvinov wanted still to include the Baltic States or to limit it to Russia, Czechoslovakia and France. M. Tofer, on the other hand, seemed certain that a mutual assistance treaty would be forced on Estonia by the Soviet Union if the Eastern Pact did not go through in its original form and appeared to regard the prospect with distaste.

I have, &c.,  
CHILSTON

#### No. 554

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent*  
[C 2013/55/18]

BERLIN, March 9, 1935

Dear Sargent,

M. François-Poncet's report of March 5th<sup>1</sup> is a little wide of the mark on some points. I fear I must contradict my French colleague when he says that Hitler's entourage has been recruited since the Saar plebiscite from the advanced and rasher elements of the party. I cannot imagine where he got hold of this idea. Hitler's entourage has not altered in the least but it is true, as I have said in my telegrams, that since the Saar his head has swollen so much that he now requires an outsize in halos. But his entourage, at any rate so far as foreign policy is concerned, is the same: Neurath, Ribbentrop, Bülow and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with Göring, Blomberg and Schacht in the second line.

2. I know that the story is circulating that Bülow took up the cudgels against Neurath and urged a diplomatic illness, but it is not true for Bülow is not such a fool as to engage in open war with either his chief, Baron Neurath, or Ribbentrop. Hitler himself was the author of the decision to postpone the

<sup>1</sup> The gist of this report on reasons for the postponement of the British Ministers' visit to Berlin was given to Mr. Wigram by the French Embassy on March 7 and a copy was sent by Mr. Sargent to Sir E. Phipps for his comments.

visit and nobody else. As I said before, the decision was due 50% to hoarseness and 50% to choler. Or, to put it another way, 50% to vanity and 50% to spite. Strange as it may sound, his voice is one of Hitler's great assets; at any rate the effect on a German audience is astonishing. He would hate to be unable to inflict its full volume and true timbre on the Secretary of State.

3. Hitler's annoyance was due first and foremost to the fact that he is encountering difficulty in the schools with the new teaching of the Youth. Parents complain that it is militaristic and to have the parents' views confirmed by such an authority as the British Government is distinctly awkward.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore it is distinctly awkward for the population of Germany to be told that it is Hitler's policy which is upsetting not merely Europe but England who has done so much for Germany in the past. (Goebbels took good care to see that the incriminating sentences in the White Paper only appeared in the leading newspapers, most of them with a paltry circulation and read only by the intelligentsia).

4. Naturally Hitler was annoyed to find that Ribbentrop's dream of an England only too ready to grasp the German hand—and indeed his own dream that England was fundamentally friendly—were shattered by the White Paper.

5. Incidentally Ward Price of the 'Daily Mail', who has been here in search of an interview with Hitler (which he has not yet succeeded in getting), has perhaps helped to calm the troubled waters. At any rate he told the Chancellor's secretary in the presence of one of my staff that the White Paper was a pure accident. Having to defend the increased military estimates the National Government thought the easiest way was to put the blame on Hitler, thinking in this way to ward off an attack by the Opposition. The plan, he explained, miscarried owing to the Berlin bombshell. This argument would appeal to Hitler who sympathises with the protagonists of powerful armaments everywhere except in France and Russia. He and Neurath have always urged us to re-arm. Neurath told me today that it was not the fact that we were re-arming that annoyed the German Government, but the mode and moment of its announcement.

Yrs ever,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>2</sup> In a minute of March 14 Mr. Creswell remarked that this statement introduced 'a completely new factor—that of internal discontent about the militaristic training of youth'. Sir R. Vansittart commented on March 15: 'It shows how true we struck.' The reference is to the comment on this point in paragraph 12 of the White Paper (Cmd. 4827, p. 6).

**No. 555**

*Letter from Sir N. Henderson (Belgrade) to Mr. Sargent*

[C 2397/55/18]

BELGRADE, March 9, 1935

My dear Moley,

Many thanks for your telegram no. 6 regarding His Majesty's Government's policy towards an Eastern pact without Germany.<sup>1</sup>

I did not expect very much and did not get it. That is why I expressed no opinion here and told the Yugoslav Government they had better find out for themselves through Djourić.<sup>2</sup> I told them that I doubted if he would get a very definite reply as the Eastern pact was part of the whole, security, equality and disarmament; and if the whole could not be achieved what came after must be largely hypothesis.

Since I wrote my despatch no. 53<sup>3</sup> neither the Prince Regent nor Pourić have [*sic*] re-opened the question so I shall leave it at that unless they do. The Prince Regent is violently anti-Soviet Russia which complicates matters, as well as being somewhat pro-German. He has a German brother-in-law as well as a British one. He has strong likes and dislikes; which is a disadvantage except so far as he is intensely anxious to be well thought of by the British. For instance he is very anti King Boris<sup>4</sup> and anti Venizelos:<sup>5</sup> but luckily again not personally indisposed towards Italians.

Yours ever,

NEVILLE HENDERSON

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of March 6 referred to No. 467 and said that it was impossible to say more than that 'our policy is to help France and Russia to devise if possible an Eastern Pact which would not be open to the same German and Polish objections as was the July scheme and to use the negotiations for a general settlement as a means of inducing Germany to accept such a modified Eastern Pact'.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. George Djourić was Yugoslav Minister in London.

<sup>3</sup> No. 467.

<sup>4</sup> Boris III, King of Bulgaria since October 1918.

<sup>5</sup> M. Venizelos, leader of the Greek Liberal party and former Prime Minister, had supported the recent unsuccessful revolt against the government of M. Tsaldaris.

**No. 556**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 12, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 64 Saving: Telegraphic [C 1991/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 11, 1935

Sir G. Clerk's despatch No. 330.<sup>1</sup>

Monsieur Léger's memorandum appears to take no account of the temper of German Government or the situation here.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. This despatch of March 2, received March 4, enclosed a memorandum dated February 28, communicated to Sir G. Clerk on the instructions of M. Laval, which

It would have been possible for the French last year to have obtained an agreed margin of superiority but there is no prospect of doing so today.

German attitude is that each country must fix for itself its defensive requirements.

To raise the question of 'potentiel de guerre' would merely provoke reply that Germany must consider immensity of Russian 'potentiel de guerre'. Minister of War elaborated this point with me in conversation two days ago.<sup>2</sup>

Demilitarized zone may yet be saved for the present particularly if German requirements elsewhere are granted.

It is clear from M. Léger's memorandum and the French press that French Government are reluctant to face the unpalatable fact that German demands are increasing daily in proportion to increase in German strength. There is no doubt that German Government already feel sufficiently strong to reject any convention rather than bind themselves to a position of inferiority vis-à-vis France. Indeed they will probably claim superiority over her in view of added danger from Russia.

included the following passage: 'Il importe de savoir quelles conséquences on est prêt dans la pratique, à tirer du principe de l'égalité des droits: si l'on est disposé à en déduire des formules de parité ou si—les Ministres français ont eu l'occasion de le marquer à Londres —l'on estime nécessaire, pour compenser les avantages que le Reich tire de sa supériorité en potentiel de guerre, de revendiquer des marges de supériorité? Enfin, il n'importe pas moins que si le Gouvernement allemand pose, d'une manière quelconque, la question de la zone démilitarisée de Rhénanie, ses ouvertures provoquent, de la part des autres Gouvernements intéressés, des réponses au préalable concertées qui, dans l'esprit du Gouvernement français, devraient nettement écarter toute possibilité de modifier sur ce point les dispositions du Traité de Versailles confirmées à Locarno.'

<sup>2</sup> See No. 551.

## No. 557

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 61 Telegraphic [C 2018/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 12, 1935, 2.10 p.m.*

Could you now ascertain whether Monday and Tuesday, March 25th and 26th would be convenient to the Chancellor and the German Government as dates for our conversations? If so, Mr. Eden and I would fly to Berlin on the previous Sunday. I must return on Wednesday as there are Courts later in the week. If this time-table is approved I should like to announce it tomorrow. If you could telephone in time I could inform the Cabinet tomorrow morning.



**No. 558**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 12, 5.16 p.m.)*

*No. 109 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2019/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, March 12, 1935

Your telegram No. 61.<sup>1</sup>

Baron von Neurath tells me that he will at once communicate with the Chancellor, but that meanwhile arrangement proposed will be agreeable to the German Government who will be happy to see you and Mr. Eden as suggested. Unless he informs me to the contrary this evening announcement can be made tomorrow.

<sup>1</sup> No. 557.

**No. 559**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 12, 5.19 p.m.)*

*Unnumbered Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2017/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 12, 1935

Your unnumbered telegram of March 12th.<sup>1</sup>

Following is repetition of my telegram No. 61 (Saving) of March 8th.<sup>2</sup>

My despatch No. 231 of to-day.<sup>3</sup>

I have no recollection of any such figure as 400,000 men being mentioned to me by the Chancellor. Had I heard it I should certainly have reported it immediately. Moreover the occasion on which this is supposed to have been said was non-existent for I have never discussed your visit with Herr Hitler. I have not had any political conversation with him since January 22nd when there was no question of your coming to Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> A note of March 13 on the filed copy states that the original copy of No. 61 (Saving) appeared to have been lost.

<sup>3</sup> Received March 13, not printed. It enclosed a copy of an article from the *National-Zeitung* of March 6 with the following passage: 'The Leader and Chancellor . . . informed the English Ambassador, Sir Eric Phipps, on his enquiry regarding the Anglo-German conversations in Berlin: in view of the present position of the armaments of the States round Germany and above all in view of the fact that it has recently become known that the Russian effectives number 930,000 men (only for the standing army, without aviation troops, etc.), a German effectives figure of 400,000 men must in fact be considered as quite inadequate.'

*Declaration by the Latvian Minister at London*

[C 3062/55/18]

*March 13, 1935*

*Declaration made by Charles Zarine, on behalf of the Latvian Government, to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir John Simon, at The House of Commons, on the thirteenth of March, 1935.*<sup>1</sup>

My Government have charged me to declare that it is a matter of profound satisfaction to them that His Majesty's Government are taking a leading part in the general effort to bring about the desired peace and security in Europe.

Having studied, with deep interest, the London Communiqué of the 3rd of February, the Latvian Government heartily welcome the Anglo-French understanding, and are convinced that the pursuance of international consultations will lead to the establishment of security.

My Government are pleased to see that the Eastern Pact has been given an adequate place in the proposals of the Communiqué, and that this Pact is regarded as an indispensable part of a general understanding designed to consolidate the peace of Europe. They are quite certain that without Eastern security, as well as stability in the West, there cannot be lasting peace in Europe.

Since the early days of her Independence, Latvia has contributed her utmost towards the attainment of mutual understanding and harmony in Europe, and my Government will make every effort which is possible on their part, to realise the ideas expressed in the Communiqué of the 3rd of February.

I offer my personal thanks to Your Excellency that, through the kind and helpful assistance of the Foreign Office, I have been kept informed about the progress of the discussions, and I hope that I may continue to be kept so informed, so that my Government may be enabled to express their opinion on the developments which may take place in the future.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 561 below.

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Torr (Riga)*

*No. 78 [N 1284/575/59]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 13, 1935*

Sir,

I saw the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian Ministers in succession to-day at their request in order to receive from them the formal expression of the satisfaction of their respective Governments at the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards European problems as expressed in the London com-

muniqué of February 3rd.<sup>1</sup> Each of them naturally stressed the importance of some form of fresh security in Eastern Europe. They all declared their belief that this country could play a part of special influence in bringing about a basis for secure peace in Europe, and expressed the good wishes of their respective Governments for our impending visits to Berlin and Moscow. I asked the Ministers to express to their respective Governments the thanks of His Majesty's Government for these expressions of approval and confidence and told them that we should do our best to keep them informed of the course of events.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>1</sup> See No. 400, note 4 and Annex.

## No. 562

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris) and Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 64<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [C 1921/848/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 14, 1935, 1.20 p.m.*

Berlin telegram No. 101.<sup>2</sup>

The announcement made to the British Air Attaché of the assumption by the officers of the future German air force of the ranks and badges of Reichswehr officers, though Captain Don was told that the air force had not been formed, is in fact the first official intimation we have received of its creation. Hitherto violations of Part V of the Treaty have been unnotified and unavowed.

The question now arises, therefore, whether this notification can be allowed to pass without comment, or whether, if that were done, the German Government might possibly maintain that our silence implied tacit consent and amounted to the grant of legalisation.

On the whole we feel that we have already, in the recent Anglo-French communiqué and elsewhere, said enough to cover our position in regard to unilateral breaches of the treaty: and that to say more is unnecessary and would be futile.

Please discuss position with Government to which you are accredited and report whether they agree with the foregoing view.

Repeated to Berlin and Brussels for information.

<sup>1</sup> No. 64 to Paris, No. 191 to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram, not printed, of March 9 (received 1.20 p.m.) referred to an account by Group Captain F. P. Don, H.M. Air Attaché at Berlin, of an interview that morning at the German Air Ministry with Flieger-Kommodore (now Oberst) Wenninger who said that the Chancellor had given the order that, as from March 1, members of the future German air force should assume Reichswehr ranks and wear the shoulder straps of regular Reichswehr personnel. Group Captain Don pointed out to Sir E. Phipps that Commodore Wenninger had first asked him on Monday, March 4, to call at the Ministry, showing that the German decision had been made 'before the cancellation of Sir John Simon's visit'.

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 15, 10 a.m.)*

*No. 68 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2071/55/18]*

BERLIN, *March 14, 1935*

I notice with some concern certain remarks made by Monsieur Laval and Monsieur Léger during the Anglo-French conversations on February 28th last, as well as certain observations by Monsieur Léger in the memorandum communicated by him to Sir George Clerk on March 2nd and enclosed in His Excellency's despatch No. 330 Confidential.<sup>1</sup>

References are made by Monsieur Laval or Monsieur Léger to 'potentiel de guerre' and to the necessity for a French 'margin of superiority' over Germany both as regards land and air forces. This shows that the French are still living in a fool's paradise. I see no likelihood of any such archaic formulae being accepted by the German government. Baron von Neurath has told me with bluff bonhomie and Herr von Bülow with brutal cynicism that they do not believe in or desire an Armaments Convention. The fact is Hitler and Co. now have no intention of binding themselves to any figures, either as regards effectives or aeroplanes. Their limit will be their good pleasure combined with financial possibilities. Not only France but Russia, they claim, must be taken into account; in fact, their 'plafond', if indeed they have one, will be so high as to be indistinguishable from the sky already studded with Göring's latest toys.

The Quai d'Orsay, however, evidently do not read, or reading do not digest, the reports of the French Ambassador at Berlin for otherwise Monsieur Laval would not state that he had heard from 'Belgian sources that Herr Hitler had made some very disquieting remarks to His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin about the demilitarised zone',<sup>2</sup> the fact being that (as reported in my telegrams Nos. 39<sup>3</sup> and 40<sup>4</sup> of February 3rd and 4th respectively) the Chancellor's threatening remarks were addressed to Monsieur François-Poncet in my presence.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 556, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 517, p. 594.

<sup>3</sup> No. 408.

<sup>4</sup> No. 412.

## No. 564

*Foreign Office memorandum on subjects for discussion at the forthcoming Anglo-German conversations*

*[C 2696/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 14, 1935*

1. First are submitted some general observations on the *method of discussion* with the German Government during the forthcoming negotiations.

2. There is an erroneous impression in some quarters, particularly perhaps in the 'Times' that the root of the difficulty is the 'arms inequality and defencelessness' of Germany.<sup>1</sup> Remove this, is the argument, make Article 19 of the Covenant as much a reality as Article 16, and we shall be 'helping Germany to think about Europe and not only about herself and her own misfortunes.' Give Germany, it is suggested, arms 'equality' and make her more strong, and she will not pursue this 'equality' in the guise of 'world power' which it is admitted Germany pursued before the war.

3. *It is desired to contest this view of the situation* and of the method of discussion with the German Government which it seems to imply. It is submitted that only an attitude of the utmost frankness, firmness and realism towards Germany on the part of the British Government can secure success in the forthcoming negotiations. Those who have known Germany best have always opposed discussion with her except upon the basis that decision and outspoken realism are the qualities which she understands and which she expects of her partners in the debate. Sir Eyre Crowe<sup>2</sup> and Lord Tyrrell<sup>3</sup> (both of whom had close German relationships and connections) never tired of inculcating this lesson in those with whom they worked. All our Ambassadors in Berlin since the war (not excepting Lord d'Abernon<sup>4</sup> and including Sir E. Phipps) have emphasized it. A few days ago Mr. Arthur Guinness (who is notoriously friendly to Germany) expressed the hope that the Secretary of State would treat Herr Hitler 'with brutal frankness': he said that 'inside the prophet's mantle' there was 'a hard kernel of petit bourgeois' with all that that implied: he emphasized Herr Hitler's fundamental ignorance of foreign affairs.<sup>5</sup>

4. It is submitted then, that the most effective way to deal with the German Government will be to treat them as the realists which they are, and not to attempt to disguise the fact (which they know perfectly well) that they are, by the nature of things, the claimants in this negotiation, whilst most of the rest of Europe is the defender; that whilst these negotiations are intended by us, if possible, to secure an agreed settlement, we do not intend to work for that settlement save in concert with the other interested parties in Europe. Our [? One] practical reason for this attitude will suffice, that it is impossible to secure agreement without them. From this it follows of course that Germany must understand that we earnestly hope she will join in such a general settlement, but that there can be no question of a separate agreement, or of separating the other interested parties on such an issue.

5. We ought to be particularly careful to avoid giving the appearance (which there is no doubt that the Germans will be anxious to create) that

<sup>1</sup> See *The History of The Times*, vol. iv, part 2 (London, 1952), pp. 890-1.

<sup>2</sup> Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1920-5.

<sup>3</sup> Sir William (cr. 1st Baron 1929) Tyrrell was Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1925-8 and H.M. Ambassador at Paris, 1928-34.

<sup>4</sup> H.M. Ambassador at Berlin, 1920-6.

<sup>5</sup> These phrases are quotations from a record by Mr. Perowne of his conversation with Mr. Arthur Guinness who had just returned from a visit to Berlin in connection with commercial and financial negotiations.

we are being drawn into a separate negotiation or that we are considering the possibility of a separate agreement with them. Our most recent evidence suggests not only that it is increasingly unlikely that Germany will join in the kind of general settlement outlined in the London communiqué,<sup>6</sup> but that before long we may well be confronted with demands of much further-reaching character. These may include

(a) freedom on the part of Germany to fix her own armaments in the light of those of other Powers, more particularly the Soviet Union, resulting probably in superiority by Germany over France;

(b) revision of the Locarno Treaty, so as to omit all reference to the demilitarized zone;

(c) plebiscites in Memel, Danzig and Austria;

(d) the return of colonies; whether in the form of mandates or otherwise;

(e) no discussion of European affairs between ourselves, France, Italy or Russia without German participation.

6. We may now examine in more detail the subject-matter of the forthcoming visit to Berlin. Its origin is to be found in the German Government's reply to the London communiqué, dated February 14th (Berlin telegram No. 40).<sup>7</sup> In that reply the German Government stated that 'they would welcome it if His Majesty's Government, as that partner in the London discussions which is at the same time a guarantor of Locarno, were, to begin with, ready to enter into a direct exchange of views with the German Government' on the subject of the Air Pact. As the result of certain communications with [?which] passed subsequently, the German Government agreed (Berlin telegram No. 66)<sup>8</sup> that the object of the meeting would be 'to carry consultation on a stage further on *all* matters referred to in the Anglo-French communiqué. *It would not be the object of such a meeting to isolate one topic to the exclusion of others*, but to have an exchange of views on the totality of matters referred to in the communiqué.' Further, the Secretary of State told M. Laval on February 28th<sup>9</sup> that 'he would go to Berlin *for purposes of exploration*.'

The matters referred to in the London communiqué can now be dealt with in turn.

*The Air Pact.* There are now British and French drafts available (the British draft<sup>10</sup> which has now been revised as the result of discussion with the Service Departments on March 4th<sup>11</sup> and the French draft<sup>12</sup> communicated to the Secretary of State in Paris on February 28th); but apart from the considerable differences between the two drafts and the many details still outstanding (such as the position of Belgium, the position of Italy, the question of indiscriminate bombing), *the Secretary of State could not communicate any draft to the German Government.* This would almost certainly be premature;

<sup>6</sup> Of February 3, 1935; see No. 400, note 4, and Annex.

<sup>7</sup> No. 412; see also Nos. 408 and 446.

<sup>8</sup> No. 487; see also No. 477.

<sup>9</sup> See No. 517.

<sup>10</sup> Presumably a reference to Sir W. Malkin's draft of February 27, not printed.

<sup>11</sup> See No. 529, last sentence.

<sup>12</sup> See Annex to No. 517.

and would be liable to misrepresentation elsewhere in Europe. Moreover, it may be questioned whether the German Government would be pleased with the idea that drafts had been elaborated without consultation with them.

The best way would be if the Secretary of State would give the German Government a general and verbal outline of our views on the Pact. But, without first sounding the French, it would seem unsafe to go so far as to suggest, in the absence of a draft, that whilst the Pact could only come into force as part of a general settlement, it could be carried to the point of initialling, or to suggest an early meeting of jurists to prepare a draft. If, however, the French and Italians could be sounded, these objections would not apply.

It will be essential, however, to make clear to the German Government the indivisibility, for the purposes of discussion, let alone of negotiation, of the Air Pact and the various elements of the general settlement. This is the general European understanding of the stipulations quoted in paragraph 5; and our credit would be destroyed by a departure from it except of course by agreement. Moreover, both Cabinet and C.I.D. have been assured that we take the view that the Air Pact can only form part of a general settlement. If the German Government claim that they have a right to an air force (either because of the failure of the ex-allies to disarm or because of the implication of the proposed air pact) and state that they have now exercised this right and established their air force, our reply can only be that we stand by the statement in the London communiqué that we cannot admit that right to free themselves from the Treaty by unilateral action, but that if the Air Pact comes into force simultaneously with the general settlement, it will presumably be accompanied by limitation provisions respecting air forces.

#### *General Settlement*

7. *Armaments.* It will be very difficult for the Secretary of State to go into any detail on this question. If the German Government were ready to indicate their present rearmament claims, the Secretary of State would no doubt encourage them to do so in order that we might learn their attitude to their statement of April 1934.<sup>13</sup> Recent information, however (Berlin telegrams Nos. 104, and 59 and 64 Saving)<sup>14</sup> seems to indicate that the German Government will declare their inability to indicate figures pending the fixation of the French and Russian figures.

It would seem dangerous to let such a statement pass without some rejoinder: for apart from the fact that we know that France and Italy are likely, under the Rome agreement,<sup>15</sup> to claim certain margins of superiority over Germany, we ourselves (cf. Mr. Baldwin's statement of November 28th, 1934)<sup>16</sup> are not prepared to admit inferiority in the air. Further, as Mr. Baldwin said on March 11th,<sup>17</sup> it is for the countries who wish for some modification of the existing treaties to give 'assurances which are essential

<sup>13</sup> Cf. No. 235, note 9.

<sup>14</sup> Nos. 550, 543, and 556 respectively.

<sup>15</sup> Of January 7, 1935.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. 295 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 883.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 50.

to ensure security for all and tranquillity': it is legitimate, therefore, to expect Germany to indicate her figures in the first instance.

A convenient summary of what the German demands are likely to be is contained in Berlin despatch No. 101<sup>18</sup> of the 30th January but this must now be read in the light of Berlin telegrams Nos. 104 and 59 and 64 Saving.

A committee under Sir M. Hankey has already put in a report<sup>19</sup> as regards the maximum armed forces to which, having regard to our own security, we should be prepared to agree that Germany should attain. This report has not yet received Ministerial sanction. The Secretary of State will, however, no doubt wish to have it with him as representing our technical views up to date. It appears from what M. Laval said to the Secretary of State in Paris last week that the French have been doing the same though we do not know with what result. Since the Secretary of State returned from Paris, the French Government have proposed an exchange of views with us through the diplomatic channel, and subsequently through conversations between experts, not indeed upon actual figures, but upon the principles which should govern the future armaments convention, with special reference to the practical interpretation of the principle of equality of rights, i.e. whether it will imply parity, or whether it will allow of margins of superiority.

8. *Air Armaments.* It is stated in the Berlin despatch referred to above that it is clear that Germany will now demand more aircraft than she asked for last spring, but that it is not known whether the figure of 2,500, which has been mentioned, includes reserves or not. The German demand of last spring for '30% of the combined air forces of Germany's neighbours or 50% of the military aircraft possessed by France (in France itself and in the French North African territories), whichever figure was the less', represents a figure of between 800 and 900 first line machines, not including reserves. These were to be 'short-range defensive machines' and were not, at first, to include bombers. Germany will now, of course, require bombers. Our present information is that the figure foreshadowed for 1936 greatly exceeds this; and that it will imply some 1,300 machines in the first line.

Sir Maurice Hankey's committee, when it considered this question in January last,<sup>19</sup> reached the following conclusions:—

(1) that 'we should be prepared, if necessary, to concede to Germany metropolitan equality with France, Italy and ourselves; that is to say, including all overseas aircraft or aircraft allocated for embarkation [*sic*] in ships, she should be permitted a figure of approximately 1,000 first line aircraft';

(2) that in respect of reserves of aircraft 'Germany should be asked to agree not to exceed total number of service aircraft calculated on a percentage basis of her first line metropolitan strength'.

It is suggested that the Secretary of State might perhaps recall Mr. Baldwin's statement in the House of Commons on November 28th last 'that we are determined under no conditions to accept any position of inferiority with regard to what air force may be raised in Germany in the future'.

<sup>18</sup> No. 392.

<sup>19</sup> See No. 372.



9. *Land Armaments.* It is stated in Berlin despatch No. 101 that the Military Attaché, while admitting that Germany may now place her demand at 400,000 men, for purposes of bargaining, is convinced that the Reichswehr Ministry do not wish to increase the army beyond a total establishment of 300,000 men. On the other hand, account must now be taken of more recent information from Sir E. Phipps which indicates that the German figure will be determined by the French and Russian figures.

Sir Maurice Hankey's committee recommended that the German land forces should be limited to 300,000 daily effectives with the colours, comprising not more than 21 infantry divisions and 3 cavalry divisions, and armed with guns not exceeding 155 mm. in calibre, and tanks not exceeding 16 tons in weight.

This recommendation substantially corresponds with what the German Government asked for last spring, though they did not specify the number of divisions, or the weight of the tanks. What was left doubtful was the question what, if any, numerical limitation was to be placed upon the 155 mm. gun.

10. *Naval Armaments.* Mr. Craigie thinks that a communication should be made to the Germans on the following lines:—<sup>20</sup>

The German Government will be aware that the representatives of His Majesty's Government have recently been engaged in bilateral conversations with representatives of the United States, Japanese, French and Italian Governments with a view to the conclusion of a naval agreement to take the place of the Washington and London Naval Treaties when these come to an end in December, 1936. It is the hope of His Majesty's Government that Germany will participate in any general conference of the naval Powers which may be held in the near future, and they believe accordingly that a useful purpose would be served if informal exchanges of view could now take place between representatives of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and of the German Government. In the course of such discussions

<sup>20</sup> In a note of March 7 commenting on an earlier draft of this communication, Mr. Craigie said that it indicated the terms in which it was suggested that Sir J. Simon might speak to the German Government during his forthcoming visit to Berlin and was 'couched in terms which render it suitable for a written communication, if considered desirable'. He continued: 'The Admiralty feel—and I agree—that if we can get German representatives over here and explain to them in detail both the course of the recent naval negotiations and the reasons for our own compromise proposals, we are likely to make better progress than if such details were to be discussed rather hurriedly during the visit to Berlin. If the German Government desire further enlightenment as to the scope of the proposed discussions, I suggest that they should be invited to make the necessary enquiries through their Ambassador in London. It is also desirable to make it clear to the German Government that we should like these naval talks to be conducted as far as possible independently of the general negotiations for the limitation of land and air armaments.' A recent communication on the subject to the French Government through the French Ambassador 'was designed merely to give them notice that we now proposed to start these conversations and we did not specifically ask the French Government whether they concurred in this proposal. M. Barthou and M. Piétri raised no objection to the suggestion when it was made to them last July, and we are entitled to assume, in the absence of any communication from the French Government before the Secretary of State leaves for Berlin, that silence means consent.'

the British representatives would be glad to inform the German representatives of what has occurred during the recent discussions in London and would hope to learn from the German representatives the view of the German Government as to Germany's future requirements. It would, of course, be understood that any such conversations should be regarded by both sides as taking place without prejudice to the present validity of the naval clauses of the Treaty of Versailles and to any agreements regarding armaments generally, which, as part of the general settlement foreshadowed by the London proposals of February 3rd, 1935, may, in the case of Germany, replace the provisions of Part V of the Treaty.

If the German Government agree in principle with the above proposal, it is suggested that the conversations could most appropriately take place in London, which has been the venue for the conversations with representatives of the other Powers mentioned. It is believed that the best results would be obtained if the German Ambassador in London, supported by the necessary technical advisers, were to represent the German Government, as experience has shown the desirability of these conversations being pursued as far as possible through the usual diplomatic channel.

11. *Eastern Pact.* It seems desirable that the Secretary of State should leave the German Government under no illusion but that the British Government consider some additional agreement designed to promote security in eastern Europe as indispensable to the general settlement at which we have professed to aim, with so much applause at home. The detail is not our concern, and we should not be drawn into it. Some compromise is obviously essential, with good will on both sides; and the Eastern Pact must be capable of some modification which will make it acceptable to Germany, and leave it none the less as an additional guarantee of security. It is suggested that the Secretary of State should make it clear that we expect the German Government to co-operate in this matter and not simply to try to put spokes in the wheel. It will be remembered that M. Laval at the meeting of February 28th asked the Secretary of State to be specially careful, in view of Russian susceptibilities, of saying anything officially to the German Government which would suggest a possible adaptation of the Eastern Pact away from its original conception. Officially therefore the Secretary of State should presumably confine himself to asking the Germans to send their reply to the latest French note with the least possible delay; but as suggested, he could strongly emphasize, in general terms, that for the reasons given above we expect that reply to be helpful. No European settlement is in fact possible if a large part of Europe be left out of account.

12. *Central European Pact.* On January 31st the German Government communicated to the French and Italians a list of questions regarding the scope and interpretation of the proposed Pact; and the German Government received the French and Italian answers to these questions on March 8th. Baron von Neurath informed Sir E. Phipps (Berlin telegram 104)<sup>21</sup> that the first impression was that these replies were evasive. 'If any practical result

<sup>21</sup> No. 550.

were desired, it would be necessary to draw up pact in a far more concrete manner'.

In this matter also it seems desirable that very definite advice should be given to the German Government to be helpful and not to attempt to put spokes in the wheel. Baron von Neurath's remark is an obvious indication that the German tendency is to play for time and to trust to further internal dissension in Austria.

13. *Germany's return to the League.* It is desirable to take an opportunity to emphasize to the German Government that if the Germans expect the world to believe that they are in favour of international co-operation and collective methods for the organisation of peace, they ought to make it clear that as part of the general settlement they will return to Geneva.

If the German Government argue that it was the treatment meted out to them at Geneva which was largely instrumental in deciding them to withdraw, it would perhaps be possible to answer on the lines of Sir E. Drummond's recent letter,<sup>22</sup> i.e. asking them to cite concrete and particular cases in which they allegedly received less than fair treatment. We have had recent indications (a private letter from Mr. Newton at Berlin)<sup>23</sup> that the German Government intend to impose all kinds of further conditions (reform of the League machinery, etc.) before they return to Geneva. Perhaps the Secretary of State could communicate his surprise at suggestions of this kind. If the Germans want to reform the League machinery etc., they ought of course to return to Geneva and work for it there.

It could perhaps be indicated to the German Government that, if they do not return to Geneva, the work of collective security must, none the less, necessarily go on. It would be regrettable that, as a result of the continual absence of Germany, this should ultimately mean collective security without her. We should much prefer it with her.

14. It would seem legitimate that the Secretary of State should give the German Government some indication of *the procedure for negotiating the general settlement* (a limited conference outside Geneva) which we contemplate. Monsieur Laval agreed at the meeting of February 28th that there would, if the Secretary of State's impressions of his Berlin visit were good, be no harm in sounding the Germans on the point.

15. *Demilitarised Zone.* It is to be hoped that if the German Government mention this matter, a very definite answer will be returned to them. Papers were put up on this subject lately; and it is for consideration whether the Secretary of State ought not himself to warn the German Government that they would be well advised to keep clear of this matter and to respect the zone. It is covered by the Locarno Treaty; and on their respect of those obligations must necessarily depend public opinion, and therefore the good relations which they profess to desire with us.

It will be recalled that the Secretary of State told Monsieur Laval in Paris that 'His Majesty's Government were signatories of the Treaty of Locarno and the question of the demilitarised zone was not a matter for

<sup>22</sup> See No. 433, note 1.

<sup>23</sup> Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

discussion.’<sup>24</sup> Since then the French have said in a note of February 28th<sup>25</sup> that if the German Government raise this question, such an initiative will necessitate on the part of the interested Governments ‘replies concerted in advance which, in the opinion of the French Government, must definitely set aside any possibility of the modification in this matter of the articles of the Treaty of Versailles confirmed at Locarno’.

16. *Colonies*. The Secretary of State has asked what shall be said if Hitler raises this subject in any form. The forms in which it may be raised are as follows:—

(1) Cession outright of an ex-colony, the mandate for which is now held by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom or by some other Power;

(2) Transfer to Germany of the mandate for one of Germany’s ex-colonies now held by the United Kingdom or by some other Government;

(3) Permission to establish a chartered company in territory under United Kingdom administration;

(4) Assistance or at least non-interference [?in] securing one of the Portuguese colonies in Africa whether by means of cession, purchase or the establishment of a chartered company.

To all of these there are objections. As regards (1) and (2), we have repeatedly stated that we do not intend to abandon mandates. The last public occasion was on December 20th, 1933, when Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister stated in the House that ‘It has been repeatedly stated that His Majesty’s Government have never contemplated any surrender of the mandate for Tanganyika’.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, even if we wished to abandon a mandate, we could not presumably do so without the consent of all the principal allied and associated Powers in whose favour Germany renounced her overseas possessions by Article 119 of the Treaty of Versailles. Of these Powers, Italy is one; and she will probably advance a pressing claim to any mandate we might propose to abandon.

As regards (3), the Colonial Office have recently stated that such a proposal, which has actually been made by an unofficial German source, would be ‘open not only to the gravest objections in theory, but also unworkable in practice.’

As regards (4), we are bound by a whole series of treaties with Portugal, culminating in the Treaty of Windsor of 1904,<sup>27</sup> to defend and protect all the conquests and possessions of Portugal against all its enemies, as well future as present. Further, we could not enter into discussion with the German Government regarding territory which belongs to a third Power who is not only a member of the League, but also an ally of His Majesty’s Government.

In all the circumstances then, it is to be hoped that if this question is raised in any form, the response will be flatly discouraging. Indeed no other answer is possible at this stage, which is not yet one for any further concession; and it is difficult to see what counter-advantages of anything like equiva-

<sup>24</sup> See No. 517, p. 594.

<sup>26</sup> See 284 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 1278–9.

<sup>25</sup> See No. 556, note 1.

<sup>27</sup> See *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 97, pp. 68–9.

lent value for the abandonment of a mandate Germany could possibly give us at present. Moreover the Cabinet have not been consulted again for lack of time and have had no opportunity of submitting so grave a matter to the searching examination which it clearly demands.

17. The Secretary of State has asked what attitude he should take if Hitler offers us a guarantee that in no circumstances will he attack either Belgium or Holland.<sup>28</sup> The Secretary of State thinks that 'we ought very seriously to consider whether we cannot for suitable concessions in other directions get the basis for such an assurance really established'.

*As regards Belgium*, the position is that under the main Locarno Treaty Germany guarantees 'the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* resulting from the frontiers between Germany and Belgium' and undertakes 'in no case to attack or invade Belgium'. Herr Hitler informed the Belgian Minister on March 9th, 1934 (Berlin telegram No. 90<sup>29</sup> of March 12th, 1934) that he 'considered himself bound by Locarno where Germany's signature was freely given'.

In these circumstances it is difficult to see what further assurance from Germany we require respecting Belgium; though it is true that when, last summer, we were considering a declaration of our interest in the integrity of Belgium,<sup>30</sup> we were anxious to do this with the approval and support of Germany. We did, therefore, at that time consider the possibility of asking Germany for some declaration on the point. It will be remembered that the Belgian Government got to know of this and did not seem at all enthusiastic about the proposal, which they considered might weaken the Locarno Treaty by which they held their position to be fully covered.

*As regards Holland*, the position is that on December 8th, 1933 (Berlin telegram No. 282<sup>31</sup> of that date) Herr Hitler declared that he was ready to conclude non-aggression pacts with all his neighbours, i.e. presumably including Holland. This was a repetition of the statement of October 14th 1933 in which the German Government, on leaving the League, declared their readiness to ensure the peace of Europe by the conclusion of continental pacts of non-aggression.

On the other hand, the Foreign Office are at the moment considering the position of Holland with regard to the proposed air convention. As will be seen from the separate memorandum on that matter,<sup>32</sup> Holland has herself given certain indications that she would not necessarily be unfavourable to a proposal that she should join the air convention. Conceivably means could be found of considering these two proposals simultaneously: it is not clear that from the point of view of Dutch opinion, it would be wise without

<sup>28</sup> According to Lord Lothian, Herr Hitler had told him during his interview on January 29, 1935, that he was prepared to give such a guarantee to England; cf. No. 391, note 3. See also *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 528.

<sup>29</sup> Not printed. For an account of this interview between Herr Hitler and Count de Kerchove on March 9, 1934, see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. ii, No. 310.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Nos. 26 and 64.

<sup>31</sup> Volume VI, No. 114.

<sup>32</sup> For the position of the Netherlands in relation to the proposed Air Pact see Nos. 500, 522, and 539.

previous preparation or at any rate without some clear reserve of Dutch rights in the matter, to announce a German promise to Britain not to infringe Dutch neutrality.

It is difficult to see why we should 'make concessions in other directions' for the above assurances from Germany. In the case of Belgium they have already been given. In the case of Holland they have in effect been promised, when Germany left the League no doubt so that it might not be said in Europe that her withdrawal from the League diminished the security which she necessarily gave under the Covenant.

There is a further objection of some weight to fresh assurances in respect of Belgium and Holland independently and in advance of the general settlement. Russia and through Russia, France might well be aggrieved at such a result which would suggest, what Monsieur Litvinov has always particularly feared, British disinterestedness in Eastern Europe. It is by no means impossible that German readiness to give fresh assurances in respect of Belgium and Holland may be connected with the obvious German desire to make difficulties between Russia and the Western Powers.

No. 565

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent*

[C 2070/55/18]

*Confidential*

BERLIN, March 14, 1935

My dear Sargent,

You will have seen Ward Price's interview with Goering on the constitution of the new German air force in the 'Daily Mail'.<sup>1</sup> Goering, with his usual impetuosity, granted the interview on the spur of the moment without informing the German Air Ministry or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was careful, however, to pledge Ward Price to secrecy, and I must ask you therefore to be very discreet about the contents of this letter—not that there is anything very new or startling in it. Goering insisted on having the text for some hours. He apparently submitted it to the Reichswehr and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for it came back heavily censored.

Goering began by complaining bitterly of the British official attitude to Germany. How was it that we were permanently in French leading strings? The average Englishman was well-disposed but the Foreign Office pursued Germany with implacable animosity. After much more to this effect Goering went on to say that Germany had no quarrel whatsoever with England. She was always ready to co-operate with us but was always being rebuffed.

In reply to Ward Price's questions he stated that Germany was now so strong in the air that she could repulse any air attack, no matter by whom it was delivered. Ward Price took this to mean an attack by any one country. In reply to a further question, Goering gave the reason for Germany's

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Mail*, March 11, 1935.

superiority. He explained that Germany's new aeroplanes were superior to any fleet now in existence, because they were of the latest and most up-to-date pattern, while a great portion of the fleets of other countries consisted of obsolescent machines. (All this part was heavily scored out by the Defence Ministry).

Finally Goering used very strong language about France. If they dared to go to war with Germany, the accursed French would be wiped out and it would be a bad thing too, he said, for any other country that meddled in the quarrel. Poland, he remarked, would be a useful ally, but she would have to cede the Corridor. This should occasion no difficulty as she could be compensated generously in the Ukraine or elsewhere.

If this interview has enabled Ward Price to realise that Germany is now being run by dangerous gangsters who will soon have the greatest war-machine in the world at their disposal and who are untrammelled by any electoral or Parliamentary considerations, and if he can convey this disagreeable fact firstly to his lord and master<sup>2</sup> and secondly to the British public, Hitler's hoarseness will not have been without its utility.<sup>3</sup>

Yours ever,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>2</sup> A reference to Lord Rothermere.

<sup>3</sup> A minute of March 22 by Sir R. Vansittart reads: 'The Secretary of State shd see this before he starts [for Berlin]. It is important to realise how much Rosenberg still *does* hold the field. Sir E. Phipps' last paragraph shd surely be noted by every member of the Cabinet.' A note on the file states that the letter was seen and discussed by Sir J. Simon with Sir R. Vansittart.

## No. 566

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 15, 9.45 p.m.)  
No. 40 Telegraphic [C 2107/55/18]*

PARIS, March 15, 1935, 7.45 p.m.

Your telegram No. 64.<sup>1</sup>

I spoke to Secretary-General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs this morning as instructed. He replied that the French Government were strongly of opinion that announcement should not be passed over in silence. It was true as I have said that position was fully covered by Rome and London declarations<sup>2</sup> but that very fact seemed to render it all the more necessary to deny the German Government's pretext for acting as if the parties to those declarations had receded from their position by tacitly acquiescing in recent announcement.

French Government, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued, were most anxious to do nothing to render your task in Berlin

<sup>1</sup> No. 562.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 328, enclosure, and Annex to No. 400.

more difficult and for that reason discard the idea of making immediately anything in the nature of formal representation. They proposed to do no more at present than enter a reservation in a form calling for no reply. It would not go into substance of question but would safeguard position for doing so at some future date should circumstances appear subsequently to necessitate that course. Secretary-General did not think a mere reservation would embarrass you in connexion with your visit to Berlin, the less so as it would be designed to safeguard the position taken up in London Declaration which is to form basis of your discussions. French Government he concluded hoped that His Majesty's Government and Italian Government, with whom they were also communicating, would join with them in taking similar action.

I did not press the point further as you seem to have reached no firm decision whereas French Government evidently feel strongly on the point. They will do nothing until they have heard from you again as also from Rome but I have the impression that they may feel constrained to act alone if need be.

Repeated to Rome, Berlin, Brussels, Warsaw and Moscow.

#### No. 567

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 16, 11 a.m.)*

*No. 72 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2118/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 15, 1935

Article by military correspondent in 'The Times' on March 14th<sup>1</sup> has aroused almost unhealthy interest here more particularly the argument showing that England's power at sea has gone for ever.

Gratuitous information of this sort can, in my opinion, do a good deal of mischief in Germany in the present conditions.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Defence of Britain'. This was Mr. B. H. Liddell Hart's first article as military correspondent of *The Times*; see *The Times*, March 14, pp. 14 and 15.

#### No. 568

*Minute by Mr. Eden<sup>1</sup>*

*[C 1818/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 15, 1935

There could be no clearer evidence of the disingenuousness of Herr von Bülow than the suggestion that it is our rearmament which is now to raise

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden was referring to a memorandum (not printed), communicated by the Counsellor of the Belgian Embassy, giving the full text of the interview reported by Sir E. Phipps in No. 396.



Germany's figure above that of April 16th.<sup>2</sup> What troubles me most about this declaration is the German claim that it is not for them to state what their armaments should be. This is really quite intolerable. If we were to draw up our own suggestions and put them to Germany, we should be told we were indulging in a diktat. When we ask Germany what she wants, she says that she can't tell. If, as all evidence tends to show, Germany is now rearming at a great pace, it is important that one of the results of the Berlin visit should be to make this clear to our own public. More than ever I am convinced that the three main objectives which we should attempt to realise in Berlin are:—

(1) A statement of what Germany requires in the way of armaments as a preliminary to enable us to negotiate with the other Powers;

(2) A declaration from Germany that she is willing to come into a Conference to discuss the main items of the London communiqué;

(3) An agreement that legal advisers of powers concerned should get to work to draft the terms of the air agreement.

If Germany accepts these three, then the Berlin visit has indeed been worth while. If she refuses, then equally her attitude is made clear to the British public.

I am very averse to our getting ourselves involved into the details of this or that type of Eastern Pact. There is a danger in such negotiation that the French and others will regard our efforts as prejudicing the future of the Pact. Moreover, for the sake of our public opinion, it is of the first importance to keep the issues of the Berlin negotiations, what we have sought and what we have got or failed to get, crystal clear.<sup>3</sup>

A.E.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 235, note 9.

<sup>3</sup> An appended note reads: 'Returned from Secretary of State March 23.'

## No. 569

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 16, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 192 Telegraphic [C 2114/55/18]*

ROME, March 16, 1935, 12.10 a.m.

Your telegram No. 191.<sup>1</sup>

When I discussed the matter with Signor Suvich this evening<sup>2</sup> he held that it would be best to wait for French views on German declaration since the French were principally concerned. Italian Air Attaché had received similar communication some few days ago.

In the course of our conversation one possibility mooted was that Captain Don should be instructed to inform German Air Ministry that note had been

<sup>1</sup> No. 562.

<sup>2</sup> March 15.

taken of information adding that declarations made by His Majesty's Government on the subject of rearmament of Germany still held good.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin and Brussels.

**No. 570**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 16, 4.55 p.m.)*

*No. 110 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2121/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 16, 1935

Chancellor, who returned here last night, has just summoned me and informed me in the presence of Baron von Neurath that the German Government has decided, in reply to the two years period of service voted yesterday by the French Parliament,<sup>1</sup> to bring in universal military conscription in Germany at once. Peace army will consist of about 500,000 men, composed of 12 Army Corps or 36 Divisions.

Proclamation<sup>2</sup> to this effect has been issued to the German nation.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 576 below, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Times*, March 18, p. 12. A translation of this German Law of March 16 re-imposing military conscription is printed in *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 139, pp. 480-1. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 532 and 538.

**No. 571**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 16, 7.15 p.m.)*

*No. 111 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2122/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 16, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

I did not conceal my astonishment and disappointment that such a decision should have been taken a few days before your visit. It would, I said, create a deplorable impression on His Majesty's Government, who still hoped to reach a convention for limitation of armaments. Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs said that they felt that conversations with you could now take place in an atmosphere of greater reality and with entire frankness on both sides. I asked whether decision regarding strength of German army was unalterable and Chancellor replied that it was so long as French decision held to introduce two year service.

Chancellor then said he only claimed parity with Great Britain in the air or parity with France. He would like a regular triangle in that respect. As for the sea, he required 35% of British fleet. He reiterated his usual assurances regarding his friendly feelings towards Great Britain with whom a conflict would be quite unthinkable. He abused France however saying he

<sup>1</sup> No. 570.

had invited Monsieur Laval to come here, but with no result. All his advances fell on deaf ears.

As for Eastern Pact Chancellor said angrily that on no account would he enter into a pact with Bolshevik Russia, he would prefer Germany to be overrun by France. Germany had suffered once from (? Bolsheviks)<sup>2</sup> by her arrangement in 1917<sup>3</sup> and she would never do that again. Any country that allied itself in any way with a filthy crew was doomed to perdition. As well ask the Catholic church to guarantee Satan. He reiterated his readiness to guarantee all his neighbours but he again made a violent tirade against Lithuania and declared that this showed the hopelessness of the League of Nations, who could not even make that small and impertinent country respect its engagements. That was the League, he remarked, to which we wished Germany to return.

For the first time the Chancellor refrained from shouting but this was due doubtless rather to his throat than to greater reason.

Repeated to Paris, Brussels, Rome and Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> The text is here uncertain.

<sup>3</sup> A reference presumably to the permission given to Russian revolutionaries to travel through Germany to Leningrad in April 1917. Cf. *L'Allemagne et les Problèmes de la Paix pendant la première Guerre Mondiale. Documents extrait des archives de l'Office allemand des Affaires étrangères*, edited by MM. André Scherer and Jacques Grunewald (Paris, 1962 ff.), vol. ii (1966), Nos. 28, 29, 30, 41, and 48.

## No. 572

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 16, 8.15 p.m.)*

*No. 113 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2124/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 16, 1935

My telegram No. 111.<sup>1</sup>

French Ambassador tells me that Chancellor made him communication on somewhat similar lines just before me. Chancellor seemed to be aware of the gravity of his decision and was full of peaceful assurances. He did, however, reproach French Government with turning a deaf ear to all his advances. The invitations to Monsieur Laval which Chancellor mentioned to me must have been made through Herr von Ribbentrop for . . .<sup>2</sup> did not pass through French Ambassador.

French Ambassador protested strongly against German decision just before Anglo-German conversations and indicated that he would probably soon return to protest officially on behalf of his Government.

It seems likely decision was actually taken last night for I dined with General Goering who arrived late from a Cabinet meeting and I now hear he nearly put off his dinner party.

Repeated to Brussels, Paris, Rome and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> No. 571.

<sup>2</sup> The text is here uncertain.

**No. 573**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 16, 8.20 p.m.)*

*No. 114 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2125/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 16, 1935

(Ref. undecypherable).<sup>1</sup>

Chancellor remarked to me that he must insist on having complete parity with France on land, at sea, and in the air.

Repeated to Paris, Brussels, Rome and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> The reference was presumably to No. 571.

**No. 574**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 9 a.m.)*

*No. 73 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2137/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 16, 1935

Disarmament expert at Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed 'Daily Telegraph' correspondent yesterday that recent communication to Air Attaché and General Goering's 'Daily Mail' interview<sup>1</sup> had no connection with the White Paper nor with your forthcoming visit. Fact was that German Government feared that publication of their air estimates for the coming financial year would raise a storm abroad. They had accordingly decided to anticipate this event by disclosing piece-meal the existence of military air force.

In reply to further question, expert said that German Government would not make any similar statement admitting army expansion before your visit but he gave my Russian colleague his personal opinion that moment for throwing aside the military veil was very near.

Asked what was the present strength of German army he said that it had passed the 300,000 mark. Future strength would be determined by events in other countries such as conversations with you, fate of French Government proposal for 2 year service and development of Russian armaments.

Repeated to Paris, Rome and Moscow Saving.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Nos. 562 and 565.

**No. 575**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 74 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2138/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 16, 1935

Belgian Minister tells me that he had a conversation yesterday with Polish Ambassador and derived impression that Poland was beginning to feel a

certain apprehension regarding her close friendship with Germany and would welcome any formula you could suggest over Eastern pact likely to facilitate Polish acceptance.

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Moscow, Warsaw and Brussels Saving.

**No. 576**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 76 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2140/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 16, 1935

My despatch No. 263<sup>1</sup> of today contains full summary of press comment on M. Flandin's speech.<sup>2</sup>

French government is said to have deliberately embarked on armaments race and to have finally wrecked any hope of agreement. Special prominence is given to M. Leon Blum's<sup>3</sup> attacks on M. Flandin.

Germans who were already determined to fix unilaterally their own armaments level seize this excuse to torpedo a convention. It is noteworthy that use is being made of 'Marxist' opposition in France in the same manner as attitude of Labour party towards the White Paper was recently exploited.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to M. Flandin's speech on March 15 in the Chamber of Deputies dealing with the French Government's decision to increase the period of military service as the annual number of recruits would fall during the years 1936-40; see *The Times*, March 16, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Leader of the Opposition to M. Flandin's National Government.

**No. 577**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19)*

*No. 262 [C 2204/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 16, 1935

His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin presents his compliments to H.M. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit to him the under-mentioned document.

*Name and Date*

From: H.M. Consul-General,  
Munich, No. 36 of 14th  
March.

*Subject*

Disarmament.

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 577  
*Mr. Gainer to Sir E. Phipps*  
*No. 36*

MUNICH, *March 14, 1935*

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 32<sup>1</sup> of the 7th instant, I have the honour to report that the agitation called into being upon the publication of the White Paper regarding the Navy, Army and Air Force estimates has almost entirely died away—as suddenly in fact as it arose. The general opinion in Munich now seems to be that the debate on the subject in the House of Commons,<sup>2</sup> and especially Mr. Baldwin's speech have cleared the air. Mr. Baldwin is considered to have apologized to Germany and the matter may now be forgotten—until such time as it may be convenient to revive it. The more radical Nazi circles say that Great Britain has been severely snubbed and that the lesson has probably done her good. In more moderate circles, however, there remains some uneasiness. It is thought to be a mistake to allow the radicals to believe that they can so easily coerce Great Britain and that Great Britain will not react and it is feared that Herr Hitler's advisers may try to repeat the experiment upon a more unfavourable opportunity to the detriment of Germany. On the whole, however, a calmer atmosphere prevails.

2. The 'Münchener Neueste Nachrichten' of the 13th instant published a leading article upon the subject, which is a fair indication of the attitude of the moderates. This paper, though of course 'Gleichgeschaltet', still represents to some extent and is largely used by circles who are by no means entirely in sympathy with the present regime. Translation of the article<sup>1</sup> is enclosed.

I have, &c.,  
D. ST. CLAIR GAINER

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.      <sup>2</sup> On March 11.

**No. 578**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 195 Telegraphic [C 2133/55/18]*

ROME, *March 17, 1935, 1.15 a.m.*

My telegram No. 192.<sup>1</sup>

Signor Suvich reverted to this subject this evening and told me Italian Government had now prepared draft declaration which they had ready to make at Berlin. Text is as follows:—

<sup>1</sup> No. 569.

'The Governments of Rome of Paris and of London after having consulted together declare that they make the most express reserves with regard to unilateral declaration of Minister for Air for Reich regarding aerial re-armament of Germany'.

Signor Suvich observed that this declaration was drafted in accordance with French wishes but he explicitly pointed out that as air question might now be absorbed in far larger question raised by German announcement regarding their army, see my immediately following telegram,<sup>2</sup> it might in present circumstances, be found either superfluous or unwise to make it.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin and Brussels.

<sup>2</sup> No. 579 below.

### No. 579

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 196 Telegraphic [C 2134/55/18]*

ROME, March 17, 1935, 1.15 a.m.

Signor Suvich this evening was clearly excited and took serious view of German denunciation of Part V of the Treaty of Peace and the announcement of conscripted army of which he had just received news. Until he had discussed the matter with Head of Government he could express no official opinion but he expressed following personal views. Putting himself in position of French Government he would be inclined to declare Germany had placed herself 'hors la loi' by this action and he would endeavour to arrange with Italy, Great Britain (he observed incidentally that he realised we were in a special position and had our own point of view) and as many other European countries as possible to form a military bloc against Germany. He would then, speaking always as if he were French Government, inform Germany of the position and say countries concerned were prepared to discuss German armaments on certain conditions. He did not define what these would be. It was clear that Germany had wished to confront you before your visit to Berlin with a fait accompli. He was unaware of attitude His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would adopt but he wondered whether your visit would be affected since clearly legitimization of German armaments had become of little if any value as a bargaining counter.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

**No. 580**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 10.30 a.m.)*

*No. 116 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2127/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 17, 1935

I am sending Press comment in a despatch by air tonight.<sup>1</sup>

References to Mr. Baldwin in both proclamation and editorials as well as tone of Press comment indicate that arguments justifying Germany's step are addressed chiefly to England. It is evidently thought hopeless to speak to France.

<sup>1</sup> Berlin despatch No. 265 of March 17 is not printed. It summarized German press comments on the proclamation mentioned in No. 570.

**No. 581**

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 12.15 p.m.)*

*No. 43 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2131/55/18]*

PARIS, March 17, 1935

I have just seen Monsieur Laval for a moment. He read me text of telegram sent last night to the French Ambassador in London to which there is nothing I need add except perhaps to say M. Laval expressed to me more strongly than in instructions to M. Corbin his hope that you will decide in favour of an immediate consultation between Great Britain, France and Italy through diplomatic or other channels before any other step is taken. Minister for Foreign Affairs sent for the Press last night and urged them to maintain restraint.

**No. 582**

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 1 p.m.)*

*No. 44 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2132/55/18]*

PARIS, March 17, 1935

The news of Germany's denunciation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, which was published in late editions in Paris last night, gave rise to no special excitement or demonstration.



The news is received today with remarkable calm among instructed opinion by which some such move by Hitler had been anticipated and to some extent discounted.

The 'Figaro' thinks that Hitler is speculating on the restraining influence of English Labour Party and of the French Socialists.

'Petit Parisien' and 'Echo de Paris' regard the German challenge as outrageous on the eve of your visit to Berlin. Henry de Jouvenel in the 'Excelsior' calls for immediate organisation of mutual assistance since Germany's gesture renders all negotiations impossible.

The Left press is calmer than the Right. It emphasizes that the German move was not unexpected and that in fact it changes little. Both the 'Populaire' and the 'Oeuvre' urge the resumption of the Disarmament Conference.

In general the press expresses the opinion that until further consultation and preparation has taken place you will not visit Berlin.

#### No. 583

*Sir W. Selby (Vienna) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 4 p.m.)*

*No. 35 Telegraphic [C 2135/55/18]*

VIENNA, March 17, 1935, 2 p.m.

German decision which became known in this capital last night has undoubtedly created a deep impression in Austrian circles.

Political Director informed the French Minister that the decision had come as a surprise and thought that it indicated that Germany felt stronger than Austrians had in effect thought her to be.

Both French and Italian Ministers are apprehensive as to potential repercussions on the situation here but admit all will depend on the reaction of the Powers to the unilateral denunciation of the Versailles Treaty on Germany's part.

Repeated to Berlin.

#### No. 584

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 2.15 p.m.)*

*No. 119 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2130/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, March 17, 1935

Rome telegram No. 196.<sup>1</sup>

Signor Suvich's proposal arouses my misgivings. If we threaten Hitler and he continues to flout us his position will become stronger than ever and he may openly denounce the entire Treaty. Again it seems unwise to form a 'military bloc' unless we be all agreed in advance as to our demands in case

<sup>1</sup> No. 579.

he yields or alternatively we be all prepared to go to war if he does not yield. On the whole I think that a reference to paragraph 5 of joint communiqué of February 3rd<sup>2</sup> coupled with some admonitory remarks would be more useful than Suvich's suggestion especially as I seem to see basis of a convention in Herr Hitler's latest proposals.<sup>3</sup> He practically says that he will be content with 500,000 men if Russia stands pat with 1,000,000 and France has two years service. He also agrees to what amounts to a 2 to 1 margin of superiority for France and ourselves in the air and he claims a third of our naval tonnage or parity with France at sea. Moreover control has not been ruled out.

Nor do I see that your visit necessarily condones Herr Hitler's latest escapade. It was arranged before French decision to extend their conscription was reached and before Herr Hitler reacted to that decision. To cancel your visit would only augment general uncertainty and delay chances of a convention on basis suggested. The ideal procedure would of course be if you could come to Berlin with a general mandate from the other Powers concerned.

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Moscow and Warsaw.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 400, note 4 and Annex.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 571.

## No. 585

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 5.45 p.m.)*

*No. 117 Telegraphic [C 2128/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, March 17, 1935, 5.5 p.m.

My telegram No. 111.<sup>1</sup>

Italian Ambassador tells me that he was received just after me yesterday by the Chancellor who began, as he remarked to me, by stating that he presumed His Excellency knew the gist of communication he was about to make to him. Like myself Signor Cerruti replied that he had no idea why he had been summoned. (German and foreign press had been informed by the Minister of Propaganda at 4 p.m. whereas I and my French, Italian and Polish colleagues were only told by the Chancellor at short intervals from 5 p.m.)

The Chancellor said that he had had this law in his drawer for a long time past and he now took it out in view of the British White Paper, the debate in the House of Commons and particularly the French decision to introduce two years service. Further 'chatterings' were therefore useless.

He referred also to 101 Russian divisions and 31 Polish divisions which might be arrayed against Germany beside the French, Belgian and Little Entente armies.

Italian Ambassador remarked that he could of course only give his personal opinion which was that this step was not calculated to increase the

<sup>1</sup> No. 571.

chances of peace. This the Chancellor hotly denied, using similar arguments as he had to me and laying particular stress on Mr. Baldwin's statement in the House of Commons last week regarding the necessity for self-respecting States to take essential measures for self-defence<sup>2</sup> which he had now done.

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Moscow, Warsaw and Brussels.

<sup>2</sup> See 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 59.

#### No. 586

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 5.35 p.m.)*

*No. 118 Telegraphic [C 2129/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 17, 1935, 5.5 p.m.

I learn from well-informed Polish circles here that conscription decree<sup>1</sup> has aroused grave anxiety in Warsaw.

Informant stated that Poland only came to an agreement with Germany because she realised that the Hitler régime meant the end of the Versailles Treaty as neither France nor other signatories were ever likely to enter the lists for the military, not to mention the territorial provisions of it.

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Warsaw, Moscow and Brussels.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 570.

#### No. 587

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 17, 6.55 p.m.)*

*No. 45 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2143/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, March 17, 1935

Although French press as a result no doubt of Monsieur Laval's intervention is comparatively restrained it is evident that all circles here if not altogether surprised are profoundly moved by German announcement. It is generally held that Herr Hitler himself is running true to the form disclosed in 'Mein Kampf' but what alarms French opinion is the paean of joy with which the announcement was greeted by the German public. It must be assumed that an act of war would be hailed with the same enthusiasm. It is only [?by] remaining united in the face of this challenge [?and] speaking to Germany in tones free from weakness—the only language she understands—that it will be possible to arrest the madness which is obtaining an ever increasing hold on German people. There is a general demand for immediate consultation under the Rome and London declarations between Great Britain, France and Italy with whom in some questions the Soviet are associated.

Monsieur Laval, as you will have realised from communication made to you by the French Ambassador in London,<sup>1</sup> takes a very grave view. He

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 581.

regards the matter as a typical case for consideration by League of Nations after preliminary consultation between the Powers, parties to Rome and London declarations.

Repeated to Berlin, Rome and Moscow.

**No. 588**

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 54 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2146/55/18]*

PARIS, March 17, 1935

Though much of what M. Laval said to me in the course of an interview which I had with him yesterday before receipt of news from Berlin may now be of academic interest only it may nevertheless be well to place it on record.

2. I had asked to see him in the hope of ascertaining what had passed at a number of interviews which I had reason to know German Ambassador had been having with him. M. Laval assured me that nothing fresh had transpired though he had been rather expecting that the German failure to detach Great Britain from France would be followed by an attempt to detach France from Great Britain. If any such attempt were made he would inform me. He was personally strongly opposed to the idea of a separate Franco-German agreement, as any offer to that end which Germany might make would necessarily be at the expense of others. Though it might appear attractive to France at first blush it would be a short-sighted policy in that it could only end by increasing the unrest and suspicion prevailing elsewhere in Europe.

3. I mentioned to M. Laval that our information from Berlin appeared to exclude all question of France obtaining a margin of superiority in any armaments convention which it might be possible to negotiate. His reply confirmed my belief that the fool's paradise referred to by Sir Eric Phipps in his telegram No. 68 Saving<sup>1</sup> was a consciously created one, designed for purposes of window-dressing, and that the French Government had latterly cherished but the faintest hope of securing from Germany any offer to which they could agree. M. Laval went on to say that he wished you every success in your visit to Berlin though he feared that the omens were all against you. His own policy would be to continue to treat Germany with every possible consideration in a despairing hope of inducing her to collaborate loyally in the work of ap[p]easement. He was particularly anxious to avoid doing anything which might have the appearance of being directed against her, and, if she maintained her objection to mutual assistance engagements, he would contrive that any arrangement of that kind which France might make with Russia would remain open to Germany's accession so that she could take up her share in its benefits whenever she wished.

<sup>1</sup> No. 563.

4. In the course of our conversation M. Laval told me in confidence that he might pay a visit to Moscow at some date after the Lord Privy Seal's return. The Russian Ambassador had just informed him that such a visit would be welcome. Apart from other considerations M. Laval was bound by his agreement with M. Litvinoff to consult with him again in the event of Germany refusing to participate in the Eastern Pact in its original form. In that circumstance a personal visit would doubtless be the best way of effecting that consultation. No decision had however yet been taken, and M. Laval would be careful, when the time came, to prevent his visit from appearing to clash in any way with that of Mr. Eden. He also told me that on his return from Moscow he might conceivably visit Berlin. This, however, was still very uncertain and he suggested that for the moment I should say nothing about it. I think it nevertheless better to do so in view of the allusion to such a visit contained in Sir Eric Phipps' telegram No. 29.<sup>2</sup> M. Laval did not divulge through what channel the suggestion had reached him. He merely said that he had been given to understand that his visit would be all the more welcome in that he was the only French Minister who had hitherto had the courage to go to Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> No. 572 had been repeated to Paris as Berlin telegram No. 29.

#### No. 589

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 9 a.m.)*

*No. 77 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2141/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 17, 1935

The introduction of conscription has been received with great satisfaction in Berlin. There is no great display of enthusiasm but populace are evidently in line with the Fuehrer. Whether by accident or design Herr Hitler chose the eve of the famous anniversary of proclamation issued by the King of Prussia on March 17th, 1813, summoning the country to revolt against French tyranny. The revolt ended with Waterloo.

#### No. 590

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 2 a.m.)*

*No. 46 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2144/55/18]*

PARIS, March 18, 1935

Sir E. Phipps telegram No. 119.<sup>1</sup>

I can hold out no hope that Herr Hitler's latest proposals would be regarded by French Government as the basis of a convention. Owing to Germany's reserves of manpower, her militarisation of German youth and her capacity for industrial expansion they already regard parity on paper as

<sup>1</sup> No. 584.

spelling inferiority for France in reality. But under Hitler's latest proposals they would not even get parity on paper since against Germany's 500,000 men they can set less than 400,000 serving the colours in France including contingent destined for emergency service overseas. (French Government have *not* reintroduced two years service: they are merely utilizing power conferred by law of 1928 in such way as to maintain numbers of peacetime army during lean years at a figure barely that reached by one year service in normal year.<sup>2</sup> It is preposterous that Hitler should allege recent decision of French Government as justification for step which he has just taken). It is conceivable that margin of superiority required by France might have dwindled to something little more than nominal in the event of a general settlement comprising satisfactory régime of security. But Hitler refuses to participate in Eastern Pact to which French Government attach the utmost importance. Rather than accept such a convention, the French Government would prefer that Germany should continue openly to violate her obligations. Whether it be foolish of them or not, such is their unalterable attitude and no general arms convention can be negotiated without participation of France.

Monsieur Laval welcomed the idea of your visiting Berlin as an exploratory mission. While French Government would probably raise no formal objection to your abiding by your previous intention, they would regard it as an encouragement to Germany to commit further acts of defiance and they would certainly, in the absence of further consultation, hesitate to invest you with any mandate on their behalf going beyond that on which your visit was originally to have taken place.

French Government no longer believe in Hitler's desire to take part in an arms convention of any kind. They think that he is merely playing with us. They consider his recent action amounting as it does to unilateral denunciation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles has created an entirely new situation and they are clearly hoping that immediate mutual consultation provided for in Rome and London Declarations will lead eventually to a reference to the Council of the League of Nations. Though I have as yet no precise information, I presume they hope that this in turn will lead to some kind of pronouncement to the effect that Germany has violated her treaty engagements, accompanied perhaps by some expression of confidence, and that this action by a body representing all the European signatories of the Treaty of Versailles may do something to bring Germany to reason.

In any case I have no doubt French Government would now regard any move to effect a settlement on Germany's terms as equivalent to payment of blackmail and as calculated to incite her to fresh excesses among first of which would be violation with or without explicit denunciation of clauses relating to demilitarized zone. As I have already said this may or may not be foolish but there is no getting away from it.

I have ventured to telegraph at some length as I am anxious that you should be under no misapprehension as to the state of feeling here.

Repeated to Brussels, Moscow, Rome and Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 576, note 2.

No. 591

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 11.45 a.m.)*

*No. 120 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2178/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, March 18, 1935

I have informed Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the reason for wishing to make a communication to Baron von Neurath before 4 o'clock G.M.T.<sup>1</sup> He cannot receive me before 6 p.m. Berlin time and I shall therefore make the communication to him then.

<sup>1</sup> Foreign Office telegram No. 65, of 12.15 p.m. on March 18, gave the text of a draft note to the German Government which was still under consideration by the Cabinet that morning. It was explained to Sir E. Phipps that as soon as the draft note was approved instructions would be sent to him to communicate it to Baron von Neurath, if possible before the statement which would be made in the House of Commons at 4 p.m.

No. 592

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 68 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2180/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 18, 1935, 3.10 p.m.

My three immediately preceding telegrams<sup>1</sup> (containing text of note).

It would be a great advantage from our domestic point of view and put a stop to speculation and excitement if you were able to obtain from Baron von Neurath immediately the reply to the final paragraph of our note to effect that German Government still desire visit to take place within the scope and for the purposes previously agreed.

It is our hope that we shall get this assurance from the German Government to-day, especially as I shall be obliged to publish the terms of the British note after you have delivered it.

<sup>1</sup> For Foreign Office telegram No. 65 to Berlin see No. 591, note 1; telegrams Nos. 66 and 67, telephoned to Berlin at 3 p.m. on March 18, gave the alterations made in the draft note by the Cabinet, and instructed Sir E. Phipps to deliver the note with these alterations. The text was issued as a Command Paper (Cmd. 4848) at 6 p.m. that day and was printed in *The Times*, March 19, p. 16.

No. 593

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Campbell (Paris) and Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 66<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2190/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 18, 1935, 4 p.m.

Parliamentary emergencies compel us to state in House of Commons this afternoon that we are delivering a note to German Government later today.

<sup>1</sup> No. 66 to Paris, No. 197 to Rome.

Terms of this note are being telephoned to you,<sup>2</sup> and I am seeing French and Italian Ambassadors to explain circumstances and give them its contents before making any announcement. Note is a note of protest and challenges the German Government to say whether the British visit can still take place with the scope and for the purposes previously agreed. I do not think that the French/Italian Government will have any reason to be dissatisfied with terms of the note.

2. You should inform Government to which you are accredited to above effect adding that it is our intention to consult them without delay whether the Berlin visit takes place or not. If the Berlin visit takes place we shall of course count upon further consultation with them after it is over.

<sup>2</sup> In telegrams, not printed, No. 67 to Paris and No. 198 to Rome.

#### No. 594

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 5.38 p.m.)*

*No. 123 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2195/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, March 18, 1935

I have just handed note to Baron von Neurath.<sup>1</sup>

His Excellency assures me that German government will be happy to see you and Mr. Eden in Berlin next Sunday evening<sup>2</sup> and for the conversations to take place with the scope and for the purposes previously agreed.

A short communiqué in the above sense will appear in the German press to-morrow morning.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 592, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> March 24.

#### No. 595

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 6.25 p.m.)*

*No. 125 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2197/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, March 18, 1935

My telegram No. 123.<sup>1</sup>

Baron von Neurath's only comment on note, which he will of course answer in due course in writing, was that since departure of inter-allied commission of control<sup>2</sup> and their announcement that Germany had fulfilled all her disarmament obligations no steps had been taken by other highly armed powers to disarm in their turn. His Excellency admitted spontaneously that the one exception was Great Britain to whom no reproach in that respect could be addressed.

<sup>1</sup> No. 594.

<sup>2</sup> On January 31, 1927; cf. Series IA, Volume II, Chapter III.



He assured me that last thing German Government desired was an armaments race and that if we could persuade other highly armed states to reduce their forces and weapons Germany would reduce pro rata. German Government would consider any proposals you might make on the subject but he again expressed scepticism regarding ability to persuade those states. He added 36 divisions mentioned in the new law were not actually in existence but were the maximum strength at present contemplated.

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Moscow, Brussels and Warsaw.

**No. 596**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 18, 10.20 p.m.)*

*No. 126 Telegraphic [C 2198/55/18]*

**BERLIN, March 18, 1935, 9.35 p.m.**

In conversation today with Military Attaché General von Reichenau stated that thirty-six divisions represented requirements of German security. The establishment had been fixed as a law to avoid any question of bargaining and represented under the present economic conditions maximum modern army which Germany could bear if budget was to balance. Unless political conditions changed very much in the future this total was likely to hold good for many years.

No figures had been mentioned as regards air or navy to avoid prejudicing tentative proposals which had already been made to Great Britain.

He emphasized that door was by no means barred to a political agreement and that leading political circles in Germany undoubtedly had hoped that your visit would take place as arranged. He admitted strain on foreign relations caused by policy of secrecy, which itself was due to fears of foreign intervention during early stages of military reorganisation. But he had strongly recommended that they must now return to normal policy of frankness as regards peace establishment. The army list, distribution of troops and number of troops to be trained would be published. Actual organization of corps and divisions had not yet been determined and a state of flux prevails.

In reply to a question he said that thirty-six divisions represented a programme and not as German papers have suggested an actual establishment. At present time Germany did not have more than some twenty-five divisions in process of formation apart from police, which are to be incorporated in the army.

Repeated to Paris, Rome, Moscow and Warsaw.

**No. 597**

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19)*

*No. 17 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2206/55/18]*

**BRUSSELS, March 18, 1935**

On return of Ministers from Paris late last night<sup>1</sup> the following statement was made by Minister for Foreign Affairs with regard to German announcement concerning rearmament.

'The event is serious. It demands the most earnest attention of the Governments concerned. It can compromise all the labour expended at Rome and London for the organisation of security and peace although perhaps it scarcely modifies the actual position of fact which was already suspected. The Powers must consult together and M. Laval has already taken the initiative in this direction. The safeguarding of peace requires the concerted action of the Powers.

'We have discussed the situation with the French Ministers and the French Government is maintaining a calm attitude. Exchanges of opinion are now taking place and it will be readily understood if I refrain for the moment from all commentary. Belgium will remain in close contact with the Great Powers which are the guarantors of her security.'

<sup>1</sup> M. Theunis, accompanied by M. Hymans, M. Gutt (Minister of Finance), and M. Francqui (Minister without portfolio), had been discussing economic and monetary questions in Paris. They returned to Brussels on the evening of March 17.

**No. 598**

*Sir P. Ramsay<sup>1</sup> (Budapest) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 22, 12.30 p.m.)*

*No. 10 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2410/55/18]*

**BUDAPEST, March 18, 1935**

The news of German government's sudden decision to introduce conscription was received here when Prime Minister and all members of the government were electioneering in the provinces.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs is still away for the week-end, press department have endeavoured, so far with success, to limit press to reproduction of foreign press comments pending his return to the capital tomorrow. Event is however regarded as of the utmost importance for future of Hungary and the first general impression appears to be satisfaction with bold and severe blow to peace treaties and some curiosity is expressed as to whether your projected visit to Berlin will take place.

Repeated to Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Minister at Budapest.

No. 599

*Minute by Sir R. Vansittart*

[C 2220/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 18, 1935*

The French Ambassador called this morning. He is seeing the Secretary of State this afternoon at 5.<sup>1</sup> He said that his Government hoped, indeed were confident, that no communication would be sent by H.M.G. to the German Govt. before there had been communication with the French Govt. To do otherwise would be to put the French Govt. as co-signatory of the London communiqué, in a very awkward position with its own public. I think that the French Govt. will make no difficulty about our note, or about the course which we contemplate. They are, however, much concerned to maintain solidarity with us in this matter.

It is therefore essential that our communication to the German Govt. shd not be sent until *after* M. Corbin has been fully informed at his interview this afternoon. That will, I think, count as the necessary communication with the French Govt.; but it is a minimum.

R.V.

<sup>1</sup> A note by Mr. Seymour read: 'The S. of S. saw this minute and the interview with the French Ambr. took place at 3.0 this afternoon. The S. of S. also saw the Italian and Belgian Ambrs. and told them of our action. H.J.S. Mar. 18.'

No. 600

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Campbell (Paris)*

*No. 600 [C 2309/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 18, 1935*

Sir,

I asked the French Ambassador to see me this afternoon<sup>1</sup> before I answered Mr. Lansbury's question in the House of Commons about the action we were taking in regard to the German announcement of the decision to adopt conscription and to increase the peace basis of the German army to 36 divisions.<sup>2</sup> I explained to the Ambassador that we found it necessary to deliver a note to the German Government on this subject at once, since any delay for the purpose of further consultation with other Governments would have encouraged the suspicion that we were hesitating and, moreover, could not be reconciled with the imminence of the date for our Berlin visit. At the same time, we desired to keep in the closest touch with his and other Governments with whom we had already been in communication—indeed, we had already sent a copy of the note, which Sir Eric Phipps would deliver, to you

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 599, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> See 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 827.

for early information.<sup>1</sup> After we had received the German reply to the last paragraph of the note, we should be able to continue diplomatic communications with Paris, Rome and Brussels and after the visit to Berlin (if it took place) and Mr. Eden's visits to Moscow and Warsaw, we felt it would be necessary to have further consultations with France, Italy and Belgium.

2. M. Corbin raised no positive objection to the course proposed and, indeed, indicated that he appreciated its necessity. At the same time he feared that the French Government might find themselves in some difficulty because the fact that we were still prepared to go to Berlin after the latest German announcement would be interpreted by a section of French opinion as indicating a willingness to compromise and even to acquiesce. I told the Ambassador that the alternative of refusing to carry out the visit did not seem likely to lead to any positive result, and that while we were not prepared at German dictation to alter the scope and purpose of the Anglo-German discussion, we felt that if the German Government replied in the affirmative to our question, the proper course would be to carry out the visit, but, as I had already said, we should keep in close touch with the French Government who were responsible jointly with ourselves for the London declaration.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 593, note 2.

## No. 601

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 338 [C 2310/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 18, 1935*

Sir,

I asked the Italian Ambassador to see me this afternoon before I answered Mr. Lansbury's question in the House of Commons<sup>1</sup> about the action we were taking in regard to the German announcement of the decision to adopt conscription and to increase the peace basis of the German army to 36 divisions. After expressing the congratulations of H.M.G. on the improved relations between Italy and Yugoslavia which Signor Mussolini's message to Belgrade<sup>2</sup> had done so much to bring about, I explained to the Ambassador that we found it necessary to deliver a note to the German Government on the subject of their announcement at once, since any delay for the purpose of further consultation with other Governments would have encouraged the suspicion that we were hesitating and, moreover, could not be reconciled with the imminence of the date for our Berlin visit. At the same time, we desired to keep in the closest touch with his and other Governments with

<sup>1</sup> See No. 600, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the friendly message from Signor Mussolini delivered to the Prince Regent of Yugoslavia on March 15 by the new Italian Minister at Belgrade, Signor Viola di Campoalto; see *The Times*, March 16, p. 11.

whom we had already been in communication—indeed, we had already sent a copy of the note which Sir Eric Phipps would deliver to you for early information. After we had received the German reply to the last paragraph of the note, we should be able to continue diplomatic communications with Paris, Rome and Brussels, and after the visit to Berlin (if it took place) and Mr. Eden's visits to Moscow and Warsaw, we felt it would be necessary to have further consultations with France, Italy and Belgium.

2. Signor Grandi raised no objection to the course proposed and said that while it was easy to suggest criticisms, it was difficult to propose any more satisfactory alternative. He had been much struck by the apparent change in British opinion in favour of a more conciliatory treatment of Germany in recent months, and contrasted the present attitude with that which prevailed after the outrages of June 30th.<sup>3</sup> He was not in a position to criticise, for Italians had also very much changed (in a reverse order) their attitude to Germany. He did not envy the task of the British representatives if they went to Berlin, but they had his warmest good wishes.

<sup>3</sup> See Volume VI, e.g. Nos. 473-8.

## No. 602

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Ovey (Brussels)*

*No. 150 [C 2308/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 18, 1935*

Sir,

I asked the Belgian Ambassador to see me this afternoon and explained to him the circumstances which had led to the answer I gave in the House of Commons to Mr. Lansbury's question about the action we were taking in regard to the German announcement of the decision to adopt conscription and to increase the peace basis of the German army to 36 divisions,<sup>1</sup> and I gave him a copy of the note which Sir Eric Phipps was delivering to the German Government, explaining that we had already communicated its terms to you<sup>2</sup> in order that you might inform the Belgian Government. The Belgian Ambassador read it with attention and expressed his warm approval of the document.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 600.

<sup>2</sup> In Foreign Office telegram No. 30 of 5 p.m. on March 18, not printed.

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 47 Telegraphic [C 2212/55/18]*

PARIS, March 19, 1935, 4 a.m.

Your telegram No. 66.<sup>1</sup>

I made communication as instructed to Monsieur Laval this evening. After begging me to tell you that he quite understood that Parliamentary exigencies compelled you to make a statement today he said that he could nevertheless not conceal his disappointment that His Majesty's Government had felt themselves under the necessity of taking this step without further consultation with the French Government. In the first place the French public was looking to him to take some decisive step in the face of the German challenge. Out of consideration for His Majesty's Government and with the desire to maintain the solidarity exemplified in the London Declaration he had deferred action pending consultation with His Majesty's Government (and the Italian Government) as to the manner of protest to be registered. The fact that His Majesty's Government, without replying, had entered their protest singly and in advance of the French Government, placed him personally in a very awkward situation. He would be attacked for lagging behind a Government which had always been inclined to be lenient towards Germany. Apart from that consideration, which affected mainly his own position, he was seriously disturbed. He was not one, as he had told me before, to boggle over the question of procedure. He understood the situation of His Majesty's Government and had made no difficulty about a separate British visit to Berlin which was looked upon with no great favour by French public opinion: he had even given it his blessing because it might achieve useful results. An entirely new situation had however been created by unilateral denunciation of part 5 of the Treaty of Versailles on the eve of that visit. He would continue to abstain from any endeavour to influence His Majesty's Government but he was gravely alarmed at the prospect of exhilarating effect upon Herr Hitler in his present exalted frame of mind of the fact that decision to maintain visit to Berlin notwithstanding what had occurred had been taken without further consultation with France and Italy. He feared it could only lead him before long to commit further acts of defiance and that his example would infect the other ex-enemy Powers.

I endeavoured to the best of my ability to assuage Monsieur Laval's qualms. I emphasised particularly the fact that His Majesty's Government are in a . . .<sup>2</sup> position from that of the French and Italian Governments: admittedly a British visit to Berlin had been arranged and was due shortly to take place. It was necessary for them as you had stated to make some pronouncement at once in . . .<sup>2</sup> and that in turn rendered it essential to communicate with the German Government as regards the impending visit. They could not do that without registering their protest against the unilateral

<sup>1</sup> No. 593.

<sup>2</sup> The text is here uncertain.

denunciation of Part 5. This argument had some effect on M. Laval and I think that he will say something of the kind in justifying his own position with the press.

When I pointed out that there was no modification of the original scope and purpose of the visit he claimed that they had in effect been entirely transformed by the fact that Germany had taken 'de proprio motu' in advance of negotiation to which the visit was the prelude the principal benefit which she was to be accorded in return for her acceptance of the other parts of the settlement.

Minister for Foreign Affairs was calm and friendly throughout but he was decidedly much upset. He will do his best to restrain the press but I fear that its reaction will be anything but favourable.

Repeated to Berlin, Rome, Moscow, Brussels, Warsaw.

#### No. 604

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 208 Telegraphic [C 2214/55/18]*

ROME, March 19, 1935, 4.10 a.m.

Signor Suvich to whom I communicated this evening<sup>1</sup> note contained in your telegram 198<sup>2</sup> took a serious view of our action. He had heard nothing from Signor Grandi and therefore my communication elicited his first and personal impressions. I gave him your message that we intended in any case to consult French and Italian Governments and if your visit to Berlin took place we should also consult after the visit. He then read the note.

He enquired whether we had decided to send it without previous consultation with anyone. I replied that I thought this was the case but that we were in a very special position owing to proposed visit of yourself and Mr. Eden to Berlin. He then said he feared that our action would be thought to constitute a breach in the common front between France, Italy and United Kingdom. I assured him with all the emphasis that I could command that I felt convinced this was the last thing my Government had in mind and I again laid stress on the assurances which you had authorised me to impart to the Italian Government. Signor Suvich remarked that nevertheless we had taken an independent line and one which placed the two other Governments in a most difficult position. What had happened? The Germans by unilateral action had torn up Part 5 of the Treaty of Versailles. His Majesty's Government . . .<sup>3</sup> in last sentence in same note asked whether basis previously agreed upon for visit to Berlin held good but we must surely have realised that the basis no longer existed owing to Germany's action. Germany had now replied (Signor Cerruti gave this information to Signor Suvich on the telephone

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was drafted on March 18.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed; cf. No. 593, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> The text is here uncertain.

during my conversation with the latter) that the scope and purposes of conversations remained unchanged but she could only give such assurance with her tongue in her cheek since she herself had changed them. What would be the position of France and Italy? Italy had stated in answer to the French note<sup>4</sup> that she was ready to enter joint protest with France and Great Britain against Germany's action and that she was willing thereafter to enter into consultation on the 3rd French point namely that concerning other Powers and Council of the League. Italy said that she would reserve her opinion until after consultation had taken place. His Majesty's Government had however decided on the visit to Berlin without consultation and in spite of German action. If France and Italy now entered a strong protest against that action it would imply a certain measure of criticism against the decision of His Majesty's Government. Germans could not but rejoice in the present situation as they would believe they had succeeded in detaching to some extent United Kingdom from France and Italy which was their great desire. Further the apparent acquiescence of His Majesty's Government by the visit would only lead to an increase in their future demands. Signor Mussolini had told the French Ambassador today that the only chance of keeping Germany in order lay in a strong common front between the three Powers. Previous to the acute development of the Austrian problem Italy had been the weak link in the chain, indeed Signor Suvich admitted that his policy had been somewhat equivocal. Today it was United Kingdom which seemed inclined to change its attitude.

I used every argument to persuade him that he was completely mistaken and that the note had been forced upon us because we had to come to an immediate decision about Berlin visit but I fear he thinks whatever our intentions may be we have made a serious miscalculation and played into German hands and placed France and Italy in an unpleasant dilemma. He does not believe there is the slightest chance of obtaining any change in decisions already taken by Germany. The latter will of course be prepared to discuss the problems mentioned in London communiqué<sup>5</sup> but it will be on an entirely different basis from that previously foreseen. I ought perhaps to add that Signor Suvich has not yet had the possibility of talking to Signor Mussolini on the subject but I fear he would not have expressed himself so strongly (? and) explicit[ly] unless he was comparatively certain that his chief would adopt a very similar attitude.<sup>6</sup>

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Nos. 578 and 579.

<sup>5</sup> Of February 3; see Annex to No. 400.

<sup>6</sup> This telegram was minuted as follows by Sir R. Vansittart: 'This is a very serious telegram. It is exactly what I expected. In my view we went much too fast and too far yesterday. We may try to justify that by our own Parliamentary requirements, but the foreigner will of course not be convinced by that. The requirements of home politics are beginning to play too big a part in influencing foreign policy. After all there *are* foreigners, and we have to take count of them.'

'I feel bound to express my very grave apprehension that, unless we are extremely careful, *more* careful indeed, in future, we may find that the German jack o' lantern has led us into a deep and irretrievable bog, in which we shall have sacrificed everything for nothing.'



'This telegram is all the more significant in that it comes from *Italy*. I think the Prime Minister and Mr. Baldwin shd. also see it. R.V. March 19.' This minute was initialled by Mr. Eden: 'A.E. March 21.'

Ten days later Sir J. Simon added the following minute:

'I hope, now that the Berlin visit is over, critics, foreign and domestic, may take a calmer view. The justification for the decision of Mar. 18th was not purely the requirements of home politics: it was also to be found in the considerations (a) that a consultation with France and Italy would have taken days, and might have ended in formal disagreement (b) that in the meantime strong and widespread feeling that we ought not to abandon the visit would have been increasingly manifest. The "united front" would have suffered far more in that way than by showing that, for once, on the subject of a purely British visit, we had a British point of view. But I agree it was very unfortunate that we could not get our message more rapidly to Paris and Rome. J.S. 31/3.'

### No. 605

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19, 11.55 a.m.)*

*No. 128 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2211/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 19, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

British note is regarded here as evidence that France has not been able to form common front against Germany. Press describes German conscription as irrevocable and therefore outside scope of forthcoming conversations.

From remarks made by General Goering last night and repeated to a member of my staff hope is still entertained that it will be possible to reach separate political agreement with England. Meanwhile Herr von Ribbentrop left yesterday for London.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This telegram, No. 127 of even date, summarized German press reactions, which evinced 'satisfaction and even relief at the news that your visit is to take place'.

<sup>2</sup> Sir E. Phipps's telegram No. 130 of March 20 (received 11.20 a.m.) said that Herr von Ribbentrop had been diverted to Munich 'by the Führer and his visit to London is now uncertain. Presumably the nature of our note made his visit unnecessary.'

### No. 606

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19, 12.5 p.m.)*

*No. 48 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2213/55/18]*

PARIS, March 19, 1935

Press today expresses greatest surprise and even consternation at the decision of His Majesty's Government to proceed with the Berlin visit. It is held that once again Herr Hitler has succeeded in his old tactics of dividing Anglo-French front. Fact that visit should have been adhered to without even any further consultation with French Government is regarded as a breach of the

declaration of February 3rd. An entirely new situation was created by unilateral denunciation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles which not only knocked out the whole basis of offer of February 3rd but should have necessitated further joint consultation and joint action. His Majesty's Government by allowing arrangements to proceed almost as if nothing had happened, have condoned Hitler's action.

2. 'Populaire' (Socialist) says that your visit now constitutes the legalisation of German rearmament.

The right course would have been a meeting of the League of Nations.

3. 'Ere Nouvelle' (Radical) asks if Germany has again taken a true measure of us and wonders how many snubs it takes to make an impression on our minds.

4. 'Oeuvre' (Radical) speaks of Hitler's complete diplomatic victory.

5. 'D'Ormesson' in the 'Figaro' whilst admitting that the decision was one for us alone to take, describes it as 'surprising', finds that the wording of the British note was feeble in the extreme and fears that it was dictated by considerations of domestic politics. Whilst refusing to believe that His Majesty's Government are Hitler's dupes he fears that this will prove a costly gesture.

#### No. 607

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19, 4.30 p.m.)*

*No. 49 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2261/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

PARIS, March 19, 1935

Monsieur Laval sent for me just now and asked me to reinforce the two messages which he has sent you through Monsieur Corbin regarding his suggestion for an immediate meeting à trois. He reminded me immediate consultation was the second point contained in communication which Monsieur Corbin had been instructed to make some days ago<sup>1</sup> and that it was also promised in message which I had delivered yesterday evening.<sup>2</sup> He said he feared the worst if there were no immediate resumption of contact and it would be impossible in time available to conduct an adequate consultation through diplomatic channels. The consternation here was considerably greater than appeared from the press which he had enjoined to apply the soft pedal and his reports of first reactions in Berlin were even more alarming than he had anticipated.

I did my best to dissuade him from pressing his suggestion at this moment as I foresaw great material difficulty in the way of your compliance. He replied with utmost gravity that he must insist as he thought an immediate meeting was the only way of preventing situation from getting out of hand.

Repeated to Rome, Moscow and Brussels.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 599.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 593.

No. 608

*Mr. Campbell (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19, 5.52 p.m.)*

*No. 50 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2262/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, March 19, 1935

My telegram No. 49.<sup>1</sup>

Unless Monsieur Laval can do something to re-establish himself, attack which is about to be launched against him by M. Herriot and others on the ground that it was due to his lack of firmness that His Majesty's Government have acted independently may result in his replacement by M. Herriot. This would spell the doom of any remaining hope of settlement with Germany and lead to policy of encirclement.

If the Italian Government favour the suggestion of the meeting would it be possible for you to come to Paris, say on Friday?<sup>2</sup> I fully realise the objections of various kinds which you may see and if I venture to support M. Laval's plea, it is only because I fear consequences of his departure from the scene.

I cannot exaggerate the consternation prevailing here. Responsible circles regard war within 6 months as a certainty unless Anglo-Franco-Italian . . .<sup>3</sup> is immediately restored.

The attack on M. Laval will start at the Cabinet Council tomorrow morning. Would it be possible for you to give some answer before then?

I think it only right to add that M. Laval himself made no mention to me of his personal position.

<sup>1</sup> No. 607.

<sup>2</sup> March 22.

<sup>3</sup> The text is here uncertain.

No. 609

*Sir J. Simon to Mr. Campbell (Paris) and Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 74<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [C 2256/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 19, 1935, 6.45 p.m.

His Majesty's Government have already delivered their note of protest to the German Government, and in view of the German Government's reply<sup>2</sup> to the enquiry contained in that note, the British Ministers will visit Berlin as arranged next week. In view of the proximity of the date for this visit and of parliamentary requirements, no delay in reaching a definite decision on this point was possible. The object of this visit, which was arranged with the concurrence of the French and Italian Governments, is, as is well understood, and as Germany agrees, to explore the situation in respect of all the matters dealt with in the London communiqué, as is also the case with the visits which the Lord Privy Seal will subsequently pay to Moscow and Warsaw.

<sup>1</sup> No. 74 to Paris, No. 205 to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 594.

His Majesty's Government would be glad to have an exchange of views with the French and Italian Governments before Mr. Eden and I visit Berlin, and if it were convenient for responsible Ministers representing the French and Italian Governments to be available I would propose that a meeting should take place in Paris on Saturday.<sup>3</sup> Provided that Signor Suvich can be present, Mr. Eden would be prepared to cross to Paris on that day and return that afternoon.

2. One matter which must be definitely agreed before the Saturday meeting can be undertaken with profit is the character of the announcement to be made at the end of it. The object of the Paris meeting would be to remove any possible impression of lack of solidarity between the three countries and not to make any fresh pronouncement. Consequently, we hope that the French and Italian Governments will each for themselves at once confirm the British protest to Berlin, unless they have already done so; we could not agree to use the meeting on the eve of the Berlin visit as an occasion for a joint protest, since we have already protested. The joint communiqué at the end of the meeting should be of the simplest possible character, and we suggest that its terms should be as in the next following paragraph.

3. Signor Suvich and Mr. Eden arrived in Paris to-day in order to take part with M. Laval in an exchange of views between them on behalf of their respective Governments before the British Foreign Minister and the Lord Privy Seal start for Berlin to-morrow. The British Ministers are entering upon their mission with the cordial approbation and good wishes of the other Powers. As soon as the projected visits have taken place, a further meeting is contemplated in which the Powers conferring to-day in Paris will take part.

4. I am seeing the French/Italian Ambassador immediately on these proposals and in the meantime have urged that the initiative in proposing this meeting should be left to us. Please see the Minister for Foreign Affairs most urgently at once and put these proposals before him. It is vital that they should be regarded and treated as absolutely confidential until I have a reply, especially as to the terms of any communiqué. I should be obliged if the answer could be given at the earliest moment.

<sup>3</sup> March 23.

## No. 610

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19, 8.15 p.m.)*  
*No. 210 Telegraphic [C 2264/55/18]*

ROME, March 19, 1935, 7 p.m.

My telegram No. 208.<sup>1</sup>

Signor Suvich told me today that he had had conversation this morning with Mussolini who had taken exactly the same line as that which he Signor Suvich had taken with me.

<sup>1</sup> No. 604.

Mussolini was gravely concerned at the situation and felt in view of our decision taken without consultation the common front no longer existed. Mussolini feared that Germans had proved so successful in their first effort that they would undoubtedly be stimulated to further action. I again did my best to reassure Signor Suvich but I fear without much effect. He asked what the French were doing? I said I did not know but that it was reported in the press that a French protest was going to be made immediately. Signor Suvich was obviously at a complete loss what to do next. He begged me to telegraph frankly about the unhappy impression which our decision had caused here. I replied I had already sent a preliminary report but would telegraph again. It is clear that they have here complete disbelief in Germany's good faith and a profound distrust of her future intentions.

Signor Suvich mentioned Austria and Memel. I asked him if he had seen interview with Hitler reported in Monday's 'Daily Mail'<sup>2</sup> in which Chancellor had drawn strong distinction between part 5 and territorial provisions of Treaty of Versailles. He had not but he declared it would only be question of time and opportunity before Germany violated these as well.

Signor Grandi has so far reported nothing.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> The *Daily Mail* of Monday, March 18, reported an interview between Herr Hitler and Mr. Ward Price on March 17. Cf. *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, vol. ii, pp. 1211-13.

## No. 611

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19, 8.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 13 Telegraphic [C 2275/55/18]*

WARSAW, March 19, 1935, 7.5 p.m.

Berlin telegram No. 118.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst owing to illness I have not been able to see Minister for Foreign Affairs, the French Ambassador<sup>2</sup> informs me he saw him yesterday evening on latter's return to Warsaw and found him evasive as usual though distinctly perturbed. He did, however, inform French Ambassador that he thought it essential that the Powers concerned should be in close consultation with each other and that he wished especially to remain in closest touch with French Minister for Foreign Affairs. Monsieur Beck also said that German Government had not made any statement to Polish Ambassador other than that made to other Ambassadors and that he felt Poland with her pact was in a similar position vis-à-vis Germany to the Western Powers with Locarno.

French Military Attaché has spoken to Chief of the General Staff on the question and has found him equally uncommunicative. As you will see from my telegram No. 14<sup>3</sup> there is practically no comment in Government press. Marshal Pilsudski is absent from Warsaw but even were he here it is unlikely

<sup>1</sup> No. 586.

<sup>2</sup> M. Laroche.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

that any authoritative opinion could be obtained until the situation has developed further.

Effect of the German declaration is likely to be that Polish Government will seek for reinsurance by drawing closer to Paris or at all events preventing further deterioration of relations with France. I do not however share the view expressed in Berlin saving telegram No. 74<sup>4</sup> that Polish Government are apprehensive regarding their closer relations with Germany. Though the German declaration may well render Poland more cautious as regards further development of her relations with Berlin she can have no reason to regret recent rapprochement in the absence of which the German military expansion would have constituted far greater and more immediate menace to her.

Repeated by post to Berlin, Paris and Moscow.

<sup>4</sup> No. 575.

### No. 612

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Sir J. Simon*  
(Received March 20, 9.30 a.m.)  
*No. 70 Telegraphic [C 2265/55/18]*

WASHINGTON, March 19, 1935, 8.32 p.m.

I saw Mr. Norman Davis<sup>1</sup> this evening who has been summoned from New York and has been discussing European crisis at length with Secretary of State and the President. He told me conclusion reached was that there was nothing for United States Government to do at present but wait and watch.

<sup>1</sup> Chairman of the United States Delegation to the Disarmament Conference.

### No. 613

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 19, 9.5 p.m.)*  
*No. 129 Telegraphic [C 2257/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 19, 1935, 8.38 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

Tendency increases to rejoice at breaking of common front against Germany.

I earnestly hope that an opportunity may be taken by government spokesman in Thursday's<sup>2</sup> debate in House of Commons to dispel above illusions and to emphasize our solidarity with the other signatories of the Treaty of Versailles.

It might be added that your visit is only being made because [of] German assurances that scope of conversations has not been in any way restricted; and

<sup>1</sup> No. 605.

<sup>2</sup> March 21.

because of earnest desire of His Majesty's Government not to leave any stone unturned to secure *all* the objects mentioned in London communiqué without which the present state of suspicion and unrest in Europe cannot be allayed.

If this course be followed it would be desirable to inform French government beforehand in order that the French press should not accentuate differences between the two governments. Criticisms now appearing in French press are being eagerly seized on here, playing into the hands of the Germans and will only make them more unreasonable.

Repeated to Paris.

## No. 614

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 20, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 11 Telegraphic [C 2260/55/18]*

BRUSSELS, March 19, 1935, 11.10 p.m.

There are two points in connexion with German declaration concerning rearmament to which Belgian Government are particularly desirous to call the attention of His Majesty's Government.

Firstly, law of March 16th re-establishing compulsory military service constitutes not merely a flagrant violation of Part 5 of the Treaty of Versailles; it appears also to involve infractions of Article 42 [?Articles 42 and 43]<sup>1</sup> of that Treaty and at the same time of the Rhineland Pact of Locarno which confirms its provisions.<sup>2</sup> Indeed by the terms of Article 2 of the law certain police formations are incorporated in the Reichswehr without so far any provision of any exception for demilitarized zone being made.

Secondly, it is the second time<sup>3</sup> that invoking the principle of equal treatment the German Government has just revoked an international agreement by unilateral decision. Is it not to be feared that under the same pretext they will adopt a similar attitude with regard to Articles 42 and 43? This would seriously aggravate the situation by adding to the violation of the Treaty of Versailles that of the Treaty of Locarno which was freely signed by the Reich and the execution of which is guaranteed by all the Signatory Powers and which forms the principal basis of Belgian security and the strongest safeguard that there is of Western Europe.

In these circumstances the Belgian Government would be very grateful if His Majesty's Government could study the question as to whether you could

<sup>1</sup> By Article 42 of the Treaty of Versailles Germany was 'forbidden to maintain or construct any fortifications either on the left bank of the Rhine or on the right bank to the west of a line drawn 50 kilometres to the East of the Rhine'. Article 43 stated that: 'In the area defined above the maintenance and the assembly of armed forces, either permanently or temporarily, and military manoeuvres of any kind . . . are in the same way forbidden.'

<sup>2</sup> See Article 4 (1) and (3) of the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee signed at Locarno on October 16, 1925; cf. No. 6, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably a reference to the assumption by German air force officers of Reichswehr ranks and badges; cf. No. 562.

take the opportunity of your conversations at Berlin to request necessary explanations and assurances on these points.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin, Rome and Moscow.

**No. 615**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 20, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 80 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2259/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 19, 1935

My Military Attaché obtained the following information at Ministry of Defence this morning.

The 36 divisions are to include all formations whether infantry, cavalry or mechanised. At present the army consists of only 21 infantry divisions, 2 cavalry, and one armoured division. There are also cadres of other units in process of formation. 9 of the 12 corps headquarters already exist.

No steps are to be taken in demilitarized zone which might be considered to alter treaty status. It is not definitely settled whether police units now in the zone are to be left there as police or withdrawn bodily and replaced by ordinary police. Further details<sup>1</sup> by bag.

<sup>1</sup> Received March 21 as enclosure in Berlin despatch No. 278 of March 20, not printed.

**No. 616**

*Sir G. Grahame<sup>1</sup> (Madrid) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 22)*

*No. 14 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2381/55/18]*

MADRID, March 19, 1935

The sudden rupture of the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty by Germany has startled Spanish public opinion and created considerable uneasiness, for, while Spain remains neutrally aloof from post-war controversies, her fear of another general war leaves no doubt. Leading articles in the Press vary slightly, for the old divisions of war-time still subsist to some extent. They however do not go so far as either absolutely to defend or frankly to condemn Germany's action, but rather indulge in speculations as to the attitude likely to be adopted by the ex-Allies and whether Germany intends to pursue a course regardless of the danger of another European conflagration. A large amount of space is devoted to telegrams from the Capitals most nearly concerned.

The news will probably cause the Spanish Government to hurry on preparations for the defence of the Balearic Islands for which purpose large credits

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Ambassador at Madrid.



are being sought from Parliament, as this is the point where, so it is thought, possible complications might arise for Spain through an attempt on the part of some Power to violate Spanish neutrality.

No. 617

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 20, 2.15 a.m.)*

*No. 51 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2263/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, March 20, 1935

Your telegrams Nos. 74<sup>1</sup> and 75.<sup>2</sup>

M. Laval begged me to express to you his pleasure that Mr. Eden can come to Paris and to say that he will be glad to receive him here on Saturday<sup>3</sup> as suggested provided that Signor Suvich can come. He maintained however his preference for a meeting in Northern Italy so as to permit of attendance of Signor Mussolini who was anxious to participate. From a conversation which he had had with him over the telephone to-day he had reason to believe that if the meeting took place in Paris, Signor Mussolini would refuse to send Signor Suvich, and would be represented by Italian Ambassador at Paris who is an entirely colourless person. In those circumstances meeting would lose a great part of its value in Minister for Foreign Affairs' eyes; I tried hard to persuade him that as the object of the meeting was to mark solidarity it did not matter who represented Italy, but he would have none of it.

I was quite unable to shake Minister for Foreign Affairs from this attitude. As often as I brushed aside the idea of a meeting in Italy he reverted to it, and discourage him as I would, he finally said he must insist on my begging you to consider whether Mr. Eden could not make the journey. He insisted that by using the air it would be quite possible to fit it in. Under Minister for Foreign Affairs' pressure I had finally to agree to transmit his message. I can only add that his position is becoming increasingly difficult. I know from independent sources that there is great (? danger)<sup>4</sup> in the Chamber and the Senate. Text of French protest will be considered by the Cabinet to-morrow morning and delivered as soon as it has been approved.

As regards communiqué, M. Laval said he would agree to it[s] being of the simplest and most anodyne character, but that in present circumstances he simply could not leave the sentence in the middle.<sup>5</sup> Apart from that however he undertook to make no difficulties, and was sure that a text could easily be agreed before the meeting. Alternatively he would agree to its being announced beforehand that there would be no communiqué. He agreed that it was desirable to keep the suggested meeting quiet until it had been

<sup>1</sup> No. 609.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram which originated in the private office of the Secretary of State has not been traced in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>3</sup> March 23.

<sup>4</sup> Another copy of this telegram here reads: 'effervescence'.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 609.

arranged, and said that he would temporise with the Press. I fear, however, that the cat is already out of the bag. The B.U.P.<sup>6</sup> tell us that they have got on to it in London.

<sup>6</sup> The British United Press news agency.

## No. 618

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 20, 12.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 215 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2284/55/18]*

ROME, March 20, 1935

My telegram No. 214.<sup>1</sup>

Italian Government agree to proposed meeting which will be attended by Signor Suvich. Italian views on proposed communiqué will be communicated to me later today.

Italian Government intend to make a protest in Berlin before meeting in concert with the French Government either jointly or in identic terms.<sup>2</sup>

Repeated to Paris by Foreign Office No. 77.

<sup>1</sup> This telephoned message of March 20 has not been preserved in Foreign Office archives. According to the docket Sir E. Drummond reported therein that he had carried out the instructions in No. 609 but did 'not expect a definite expression of view before the evening of March 20 as Italian Government are almost sure to consult French Government by telephone before answering'.

<sup>2</sup> Sir E. Drummond's telegram No. 216 of even date, received on March 21 at 9.30 a.m., said that the situation arising from the German unilateral action was being treated by the press in Rome with the greatest reserve. 'This attitude is in accordance with that which Signor Suvich told me would be adopted. He said that whatever might be the real feelings of Italian Government care would be taken in the press that nothing should appear which would allow Germans to claim that common front had been weakened thus giving them cause to rejoice.'

## No. 619

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 20, 2.5 p.m.)*  
*Unnumbered Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2296/55/18]*

PARIS, March 20, 1935

Council of Ministers this morning approved the text of a note of protest to be delivered to the German Government in reply to their communication of March 16th.<sup>1</sup>

It approved the negotiations in progress with Great Britain and Italy in view of consultation.

It decided to bring the matter before the Council of the League of Nations.

It also authorised Monsieur Laval to accept invitation to go to Moscow shortly.

Communiqué in this sense has just been issued.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 572.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Times*, March 21, p. 14.

No. 620

*Sir J. Simon to Sir R. Lindsay (Washington)*

*No. 66 Telegraphic [C 2303/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 20, 1935, 9.15 p.m.*

I had some conversation with Mr. Atherton<sup>1</sup> to-day about the European situation resulting from the German announcement last Saturday,<sup>2</sup> and my visit to Berlin next Monday,<sup>3</sup> and I expect that he will be reporting to the State Department our talk.<sup>4</sup> The question of the attitude of the United States to these events naturally came up and Mr. Atherton said that he had no instructions. It would of course be of immense value if the President or, failing him, Mr. Cordell Hull, saw fit to make any comment either as to the immense damage done to the international structure by the formal unilateral repudiation of treaties or as to American sympathy with the efforts we are making to promote European confidence. On the first point, it ought to be remembered that Germany's repudiation of treaty limitations is not merely the concern of members of the League of Nations, and more particularly concerns all the signatories to the Peace Treaties. If those Treaties can be repudiated unilaterally then the Kellogg Pact is exposed to the same danger. On the second point our own strenuous efforts stand in a special position because we are not taking sides with one European Power against another but are doing our utmost in the general interests of peace and improved relations. You will be able to judge whether the above considerations are likely to appeal to American official sentiment and whether a talk on these lines would be productive of any positive and public pronouncement. I will only observe that such a contribution at this moment would not only be esteemed at its high value, but would be a most welcome indication of the solid foundations upon which Anglo-American relations rest.

<sup>1</sup> United States Chargé d'Affaires at London.

<sup>2</sup> March 16; see No. 570.

<sup>3</sup> March 25.

<sup>4</sup> See *F.R.U.S. 1935*, vol. i, pp. 200-2.

No. 621

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 20, 10.30 p.m.)*

*No. 215A Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2374/55/18]*

*Personal*

ROME, *March 20, 1935*

In view of feeling here to which I have referred in my telegrams Nos. 208<sup>1</sup> and 210<sup>2</sup> would it be possible for you to propose either at the Paris meeting or otherwise that consultation foreshadowed after Berlin visit should take place in Rome or in a town of Northern Italy? Such an arrangement would

<sup>1</sup> No. 604.

<sup>2</sup> No. 610.

allow Signor Mussolini to participate, would I am convinced be highly appreciated by Italian Government and be of value and help in the present situation. I venture to submit this suggestion for your favourable consideration.

**No. 622**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 21)*

*No. 56 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2302/55/18]*

PARIS, March 20, 1935

In debate in Senate tonight on national defence Government are replying to interpellations by Monsieur Lémery, General Bourgeois and Monsieur Bénazet in regard to length of military service in France and violation by Germany of military clauses of Treaty of Versailles.

Monsieur Flandin, who opened the debate, recapitulated the arguments of his declaration in the Chamber regarding the necessity of increasing military service in France during the Lean Years.<sup>1</sup> The re-armament of Germany obliged France to be vigilant. The German notification had been represented as a reply to the White Book<sup>2</sup> and to the French declaration of the 15th March,<sup>3</sup> but as a matter of fact the 36 German divisions already existed. France could not accept the German thesis or the reasoning by which the German Government sought to justify it. When France proposed to bring the matter before the League it was not in her own interest alone but in that of 'la collectivité'. It was the world's peace which was at stake. The question must be thrashed out at Geneva; each party must produce its arguments and their value must be appraised. Monsieur Flandin was applauded by all except the Socialists.<sup>4</sup>

It is not yet certain whether Monsieur Laval will also speak. I learn that several senators including General Bourgeois himself were so satisfied with Monsieur Flandin's speech that they have decided not to intervene.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 576, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to Cmd. 4827; see No. 526, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 570.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Times*, March 21, p. 13, for a report on the debate.

**No. 623**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 21, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 82 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2327/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 20, 1935

Warsaw telegram No. 13.<sup>1</sup>

The news that Polish Ambassador received from Chancellor on March 16th must have been rather stale for Herr von Buelow told one of my foreign

<sup>1</sup> No. 611.

colleagues that General Goering informed Polish Government during his recent visit to Poland<sup>2</sup> of German intention to introduce conscription at an early date.

I hear from unofficial Polish sources that many Poles are far from sharing official enthusiasm for German friendship and quite realise the danger that Nazis constitute for Poland although they welcome the ten years truce.

Repeated to Paris, Moscow, Warsaw by post.

<sup>2</sup> General Göring visited Poland, January 27-31, 1935.

#### No. 624

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 21, 11.10 a.m.)*

*No. 132 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2328/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 21, 1935

The press attacks Monsieur Flandin's speech<sup>1</sup> particularly on the following points:—

(1) His repetition of war guilt accusation contradicts the facts established by international historical research.

(2) His statement that Germany disarmed not willingly but because she was beaten amounts to a repudiation of Wilson's fourteen points or to the admission that they were deliberately used to trick Germany.

(3) His complaint that the disarmament provisions of the peace treaty have been violated is the complaint which Germany has made for 15 years.

The 'Boersen Zeitung' affects a detached interest and ironical amusement at the prospect of academic League of Nations debate.

For the rest, prominence is given to press telegrams reporting attacks on the policy of His Majesty's Government in France, Italy and Russia.

<sup>1</sup> On March 20; cf. No. 622.

#### No. 625

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 21, 12.50 p.m.)*

*No. 133 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2334/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, March 21, 1935

The Franco Russian storm, combined with announcement of Three-Power meetings before and after your visit, have had a sobering effect here.

His Majesty's Government have now, I think, a unique and perhaps a last chance of concluding a comprehensive European agreement and making France and Germany see reason.

Ever since October 1933<sup>1</sup> German policy has consisted in slamming the doors and banging the tables. Herr Hitler has spent sleepless nights though

<sup>1</sup> On October 14, 1933, Herr Hitler had announced the German Government's intention of leaving the Disarmament Conference and withdrawing from the League of Nations; cf. Volume V, No. 454.

progressively fewer since each of his manifestations of force or ill temper. The fact that we have treated him like a civilised being and declined to imitate his pettish initiative gives us the right to speak to him in no uncertain tones. This right, it is to be hoped will be recognised even by England's most bleating pacifist.

Germany should realise (and it is to be hoped British opinion too) that she now stands at the parting of the ways. On one side reason and honourable co-operation with an entirely peaceful Europe; on the other isolation with all its attendant risks and financial stress. These risks are greater than Germany will admit and might even imply end of Nazi régime. In a word she must be brought to realise that Great Britain who has consistently fought her battles when right was on her side will show, and will be justified in showing, inflexible determination in opposing a German policy of force combined with a refusal to join in any concrete and collective collaboration.

I feel that if things drift much longer the situation here will get out of hand and military tendency will grow apace. Experience has shown that Barthou policy of tearing up disarmament proposals to which Germany, England and Italy are favourable<sup>2</sup> only plays into the hands of the militarists. A policy of isolation might as I said overthrow the Hitler régime. On the other hand it might only arouse a fierce spirit of self sacrifice and give a fresh impetus to militarism particularly in the air where Germany's potentiality seems to be unlimited.

If Lord Privy Seal can obtain some idea of minimum requirements from French Government and if these are within reason I feel that prospects of your visit will be greatly improved particularly as Herr Hitler and German opinion are favourably impressed by our latest show of moderation and impartiality.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the French Government's note of April 17, 1934; cf. No. 208, note 2.

## No. 626

*Sir R. Lindsay (Washington) to Sir J. Simon*  
(Received March 21, 9.15 p.m.)  
No. 71 Telegraphic [C 2376/55/18]

*Immediate*

WASHINGTON, March 21, 1935, 2.22 p.m.

Today being diplomatic reception day I saw Secretary of State and spoke to him very earnestly in the sense of your telegram 66<sup>1</sup> and used all possible arguments. I carefully explained that I was not making any representations under instructions (such action of course would only defeat its own object) and begged him to speak to the President with a view to issue of a statement in support of the principles of the sanctity of treaties and collective action for which His Majesty's Government are standing, urging that it be made at once and before your visit to Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> No. 620.

The language he used in reply was entirely sympathetic and he did not conceal his distrust of the German arms [?aims] or his disapproval of their actions and attitude. I only had to regret a reference he made to the stand by his predecessor in office for collective principle in regard to Japan three years ago where the general American view is that support of His Majesty's Government was grudging.<sup>2</sup> This however was probably only an incidental remark. But on the point of a statement to be issued now he was completely non-committal. My impression is that both he and the President would like to do it but their attitude will be influenced by considerations of domestic opinion and politics and I cannot say what they will decide.

<sup>2</sup> A reference presumably to His Majesty's Government's reaction to Mr. Stimson's proposals for a joint protest to the Japanese Government at the time of the establishment of the new state of Manchuria; see Volume X, e.g. Nos. 198, 211, 301, 384-5, 437, and 481.

### No. 627

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 21, 3.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 134 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2369/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 21, 1935

Evening press announces that French Ambassador handed note of protest to Baron von Neurath this morning and that the latter on receiving it informed Monsieur François-Poncet that French protest did not take into account the facts of the situation and that it must therefore be contradicted.<sup>1</sup>

French Ambassador tells me that Baron von Neurath received him with all possible courtesy and that all reports to the contrary are untrue.

Italian Ambassador handed his protest<sup>2</sup> to Baron von Neurath just before luncheon.

<sup>1</sup> An English translation of this note is printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 548. In his succeeding telegram, No. 135 of even date, despatched at 6.35 p.m., Sir E. Phipps stated that the rumour mentioned in the first paragraph of telegram No. 134 that the French protest had been rejected was due to press headlines reading: 'French and Italian protests declined.' He said: 'This was not the case and both interviews passed off in a perfectly friendly manner. All this is childish but rather reminiscent of Ems telegram [of July 13, 1870].'

<sup>2</sup> An English translation is printed in *D.G.F.P.*, *op. cit.*, No. 550.

### No. 628

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 21, 4 p.m.)*  
*No. 55 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2370/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, March 21, 1935

Ministry [? Minister] of Foreign Affairs was occupied in the Senate all yesterday and I was unable to see him until this morning. I found him

greatly soothed by fact of meeting next Saturday<sup>1</sup> and grateful to His Majesty's Government for having brought it about. He said that it was of great importance, and especially to French government, as a symbol of solidarity. The actual conversation was less than a moment since he had neither desire nor intention to suggest any modifications of basis already agreed upon for your visit to Berlin.

2. After your visit, when you had drawn your conclusions as to its results, and could communicate them to French and Italian governments, would be time for serious talk between the three governments. For that reason Monsieur Laval attached greatest importance to proposed meeting in northern Italy<sup>2</sup> and he was eagerly hoping to learn that you agreed to it in principle.

<sup>1</sup> March 23; cf. No. 609.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 621.

## No. 629

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 21, 4.15 p.m.)*

*No. 56 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2371/55/18]*

PARIS, March 21, 1935

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>1</sup>

I asked Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning why French Government had made their appeal to Geneva at this particular moment.<sup>2</sup> He replied that state of public opinion in France left him no choice, that French Government felt they could not pass over so grave a breach of solemn treaty engagements, that it would give other countries, by which he presumably meant the Little Entente, a lead for making their own protests and that it would serve as a warning to Hungary and any other country which might be tempted to follow Germany's example.

2. The appeal, text of which he read to me, was based on Article 11, paragraph 2 of Covenant. No mention is made of any other article.

3. No definite or approximate date was suggested in French communication to Geneva, as Monsieur Laval would like to have proposed meeting in northern Italy first.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 628.

<sup>2</sup> The text of the French Government's telegram of March 20 to the League of Nations is printed in *L/N.O.J.*, May 1935, p. 569.

<sup>3</sup> An unnumbered telegram from M. Avenol to Sir J. Simon of March 22 stated that in response to the French Government's request an extraordinary session of the League of Nations' Council would be held during the first week of April. In a further telegram of March 25 M. Avenol proposed that the Council should meet on Monday, April 15. Minutes on this telegram included Sir R. Vansittart's comment of March 26, 'there is no reason to be frightened of the Geneva meeting, though we shd. of course have preferred not to have it'. Sir J. Simon did not 'think it possible to raise any objection to this date'. It was accepted on April 1 in Foreign Office unnumbered telegram to Geneva of 6.15 p.m. of that date.



**No. 630**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 21, 7.25 p.m.)*  
*No. 219 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2375/55/18]*

ROME, March 21, 1935

My telegram No. 215.<sup>1</sup>

The Italian Government have informed me that they approve proposed communiqué with the exception of second sentence. It is the aims of the mission and not the mission itself which the Italian government are prepared to bless. Following alternative sentence has been accepted by the Italian government.

'The aims of the British Ministers' mission which is undertaken with the good wishes of the other Powers have the latters' cordial approbation'.

Repeated to Paris.

<sup>1</sup> No. 618.

**No. 631**

*Sir N. Henderson (Belgrade) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 21)*  
*No. 84 [C 2508/55/18]*

BELGRADE, March 21, 1935

Sir,

The action of the German Government in adopting conscription and thereby making a scrap of paper of the Treaty of Versailles has been received in Yugoslavia with comparative indifference and even toleration. Public opinion generally has been sympathetic to Germany for some time past and in the present case the Government considers that all action can safely be left to the Great Powers.

2. The Prince Regent expressed to me yesterday the liveliest satisfaction at the decision of His Majesty's Government not to abandon or postpone your visit to Berlin. An issue of the 'Politika' which contained some violent French comments published simultaneously in two columns a letter written by a German girl to the parents at Uzice of a Serbian soldier who died in Germany during the war. It was an extremely touching letter with a photograph of the soldier's grave and a description of how as a girl of five she had been the friend of this lonely prisoner on the farm where he was employed.

3. Prince Paul's observations and the 'Politika's' publication are both symptomatic of somewhat reluctant but nevertheless pronounced German leanings in Yugoslavia. It is not yet fully appreciated here that Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria must soon seek to follow Germany's example.

I have, &c.,

NEVILLE HENDERSON

**No. 632**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 22, 9.35 a.m.)*  
*No. 220 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2377/55/18]*

ROME, March 22, 1935

My telegram No. 219.<sup>1</sup>

Later yesterday evening Italian Government informed me that they had heard from Paris that French Government could not accept the revised second sentence. Text must therefore be reconsidered.

In these circumstances it would perhaps be best to pursue the matter in Paris.

Repeated to Paris by Foreign Office No. 79.

<sup>1</sup> No. 630.

**No. 633**

*Sir P. Loraine (Angora) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 22, 1.50 p.m.)*  
*No. 56 Telegraphic [C 2411/55/18]*

*Important. Confidential*

ANGORA, March 22, 1935, 2.20 p.m.

From frequent contacts which I have had during the week with Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs I have derived distinct impression that Turkish Government are in closer sympathy with methods and outlook of His Majesty's Government towards present critical situation than with attitude of French Government.

As His Excellency will preside over Extraordinary Meeting of League Council<sup>1</sup> this factor may have some importance.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 629, note 3.

**No. 634**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*  
*No. 210 Telegraphic [C 2374/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 22, 1935, 3.15 p.m.

Your telegram No. 215.<sup>1</sup>

Please inform Signor Mussolini that we cordially accept his suggestion for a meeting of British, French and Italian representatives in Northern Italy after the Berlin visit. Mr. Eden will so inform M. Laval. I trust that Signor Mussolini will as he suggested attend himself and I shall look forward to meeting him again.

<sup>1</sup> No. 621.

Incidentally, the hope I expressed in the House of Commons Thursday<sup>2</sup> that Germany would take part in further meetings did not of course refer to this proposed meeting in N. Italy, but to subsequent discussions.

Repeated to Paris, Moscow, Berlin and Prague.

<sup>2</sup> March 21; see 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 1410.

### No. 635

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 22, 9.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 138 Telegraphic [C 2429/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 22, 1935, 8.37 p.m.

My telegram No. 128.<sup>1</sup>

Talking confidentially to Ward Price Goering continues to harp on advantages of an Anglo-German understanding to both countries and to Europe.

Goering insists that Moscow is common enemy and hints that it would be to everybody's advantage if the corridor problem were settled at the expense of Russia.

He states that he is not officially authorised to express these views but Ward Price has no doubt that they are shared by the Chancellor.

From equally reliable sources I learn Chancellor talks not only about Russia but also about Czechoslovakia whose existence he considers a regrettable smudge on the map of Europe. The German minorities numbering 3,000,000 must be restored to the Reich when Austria joins Germany. The problem of disposing of the Czechs is exercising him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. 605.

<sup>2</sup> A note by Sir R. Vansittart to the News Department read: 'The last paragraph may be used discreetly, and the second too. The latter is perhaps everybody's secret; but it is coming to the fore again. Indeed the Rosenberg school [cf. No. 476] seems flourishing both politically and spiritually. R.V. March 26.'

### No. 636

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 23, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 16 Telegraphic [C 2454/55/18]*

WARSAW, March 22, 1935, 10.25 p.m.

My telegram No. 13.<sup>1</sup>

French Ambassador yesterday handed to Minister for Foreign Affairs copy of French Note delivered to the German Government<sup>2</sup> and enquired what action Polish Government contemplated taking.

<sup>1</sup> No. 611.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 627.

Monsieur Beck was entirely non-committal and said that the whole situation would require careful study by the Polish Government. He again stressed importance of close contact between the Powers principally concerned but the French Ambassador is inclined to think that the main object of Minister for Foreign Affairs' insistence on this point is to ensure that the Polish Government are kept informed of what the others are doing rather than to aid them in deciding upon any definite line of policy themselves.

Polish Government are clearly placed in very embarrassing position for whatever course of action they adopt is likely to give offence either to Paris or to Berlin. M. Beck's reluctance to commit himself at present juncture is thus not surprising.

Minister for Foreign Affairs appeared to be somewhat uneasy regarding special meeting of the League Council to consider German action<sup>3</sup> and foresaw serious difficulties unless the Great Powers agreed in advance of the Session upon a common line of policy.

French Ambassador at the same interview informed Minister for Foreign Affairs of Monsieur Laval's acceptance of Soviet invitation to visit Moscow. Monsieur Beck did not take opportunity to suggest he should break his journey at Warsaw.

Repeated to Paris, Berlin, and Moscow.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 629, note 3.

## No. 637

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 29)*

*No. 285 [C 2626/2626/18]*

BERLIN, *March 22, 1935*

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Prussian Minister President and Reichs Air Minister, General Göring, invited Lady Phipps and myself to dinner on the 15th instant. Amongst the guests present, who numbered about forty, were the French Ambassador and Madame François-Poncet, the Japanese Ambassador and Countess Mushakoji, the Hungarian Minister and Madame Masirevich, the Reichsminister of Propaganda and Frau Goebbels, General von Fritsch, the Minister of Justice and Frau Gürtner, and the Head of the Secret Police and Frau Himmler.

2. General Göring thus resumed the series of sumptuous repasts inaugurated by the late Captain Röhm in February, 1934, interrupted by the 'blood-bath' of June 30th and contemptuously described by the Führer in the Reichstag in July as 'so-called diplomatic banquets'. This occasion was more auspicious, however, for it served to introduce to the world Frau Emmy Sonnemann, no longer as the 'private secretary', but as the fiancée of our host.

3. The memory of Captain Röhm's dinner (described in my telegram No. 46 (saving) of February 24th, 1934),<sup>1</sup> though tinged with red, paled in comparison with General Göring's lavish hospitality. The dinner was served in the white marble dining hall hung with Gobelins tapestries of great value and brilliantly illuminated. An invisible string band played to us during dinner. Our host informed us that he was about to build a swimming bath some 50 metres long (this had also been Captain Röhm's intention, though it was frustrated, with others less innocuous, on 30th June). He explained almost apologetically to my wife that he was only marrying Frau Sonnemann at the behest of the Führer, who felt there were too many bachelors in high places in the Nazi party. Meanwhile Frau Sonnemann next to whom I had the privilege of sitting and who did the honours for her fiancé with simplicity and charm, imparted to the occasion a delicate tinge of regret by informing us of her approaching retirement from the stage. The public will bear this news with fortitude for I am assured that Frau Sonnemann lacks any trace of histrionic talent.

4. After dinner General Göring led the French Ambassador and myself round his vast residence and showed us a series of magnificent pictures by old masters which, he told us with pride, he had requisitioned from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. The Director had, it seems, objected to this raid on public treasures, of which he is the guardian, but General Göring said that he had been implacable and had threatened to take away twice as many pictures if those he had chosen were not brought round to his 'palace' next morning.

5. In the course of his post-prandial peregrinations our host showed us some plans for a sea-side residence that he is building for himself on a sandy tongue of land on the Baltic. It is made of wood and thatch and looks as though it might catch fire, but General Göring reassured us by declaring that the thatch (of his own brand of reeds from his own lake) had resisted his repeated efforts to set it alight.<sup>2</sup> After this supreme tribute to the non-inflammability of his latest toy General Göring replied to certain questions put to him by Monsieur François-Poncet and me. Torgler,<sup>3</sup> he declared, was having a most pleasant time, free in all but name, with his wife near him. It was of course impossible to release him for in such case he would be placed in the cruel dilemma of breaking his word to the State (if he worked against it), or to the Communist party (if he did not). We gathered therefore that to spare Torgler so painful a choice he will remain in protective custody indefinitely. Neubauer<sup>3</sup> also must not expect to be set free. Communism

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> An unsigned marginal note here read: 'And he (vide the Reichstag) is no mean fire-raiser.'

<sup>3</sup> Herr Ernst Torgler, a German Communist leader, taken into 'protective custody' after being acquitted on December 23, 1933, by the Supreme Court at Leipzig of complicity in the burning of the Reichstag on the night of February 27, 1933. Among other Communist officials arrested under the decree 'for the Protection of the People and State' signed by President Hindenburg on February 28 (see Volume IV, No. 247) were Dr. Neubauer, a Communist Deputy of the Reichstag, and the Bulgarian, Dr. Dimitroff.

was not to be fought with kid gloves on. Finally I inquired whether General Göring had any news of Dimitroff.<sup>3</sup> Far more in sorrow than in anger he replied that Dimitroff had deeply disappointed him after all his kindness to that ungrateful man. Dimitroff actually still maintained that he (General Göring) had instigated the Reichstag fire. After suitable expressions of pained surprise on the part of my French colleague and myself we joined the ladies.

6. A concert by some of the best singers from the State Opera was followed by two films of stag life on the Schorfheide; in these our host attired in his familiar leather suit reminiscent of the advertisement for Michelin motor tyres, was 'discovered', seated in the Wotan living room of Carin Halle, with harpoon close at hand. We then experienced the strange and two-fold pleasure of hearing at one and the same time his talking and his 'talky' voice expatiating again on the beauties of primeval forest life . . . .<sup>4</sup>

7. An enjoyable evening was brought to a conclusion by film scenes from the Saar in which excited and lusty school children greeted Herr Baldur von Schirach<sup>5</sup> to the strains of 'Deutschland über Alles, über Alles in der Welt'. In the darkened room the only other sounds I could detect were those made by impatient movements of Monsieur François-Poncet's leg.<sup>6</sup>

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>4</sup> Punctuation as in the original.

<sup>5</sup> Youth Leader of the German Reich.

<sup>6</sup> In a private letter of April 26 to Sir E. Phipps, Mr. Sargent wrote: 'You may be wondering why your admirable despatch No. 285 has not reached you in the print. Well the truth is that we did not dare to circulate it lest Cabinet Ministers should give it the same embarrassing publicity as they gave to your Bison despatch [Volume VI, No. 452]. We decided, therefore, to print it only in the volume and not to let it appear in the ordinary print series, lest the temptation to readers to pass on such good things to their friends might prove irresistible. It is deplorable, from one point of view, that such precautions should be necessary, but after our experiences last year, of which you so rightly complained, we must face the fact that we cannot count upon our Masters' discretion so long as you continue to write such brilliant despatches.' [F.O. 800/275.]

Sir E. Phipps's reply on May 1 included the following comment: 'I am relieved my Göring despatch is not to be printed. I think it my duty to show you all what stuff these gangsters are made of, but it is certainly essential that they should not themselves receive copies of such despatches, for that is what must have happened with that miserable "bison" story. I hope, also, that you and Wigs [Mr. Wigram] will be chary in future of showing too many of my effusions to the Rolands, Bonis and others of Albert Gate [i.e. of French Embassy in London]! I need hardly tell you how they all leak, and even if they do not their masters at the Quai d'Orsay positively reduce Niagara itself to a mere drain in comparison! Moreover, they will dry up my sources.'

No. 638

*Letter from Mr. Craigie to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

[A 2768/22/45]

*Confidential*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 22, 1935*

My dear Drummond,

I have just received your letter of the 13th instant<sup>1</sup> and I hasten to assure you that, shortly after the Secretary of State had seen M. Corbin,<sup>2</sup> I spoke to Vitetti<sup>3</sup> and told him of the Secretary of State's intention to raise the naval question with the Germans when he went to Berlin and to invite them to send representatives for discussions in London. I am so sorry that I omitted to inform you of this at the time.

I have no doubt that Vitetti duly informed his Government, but there would be no harm in the matter being mentioned again by the Embassy to someone in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs if a convenient opportunity occurs.

The Italians have never been so nervous of our discussing this question with the Germans as have the French, but I quite agree that we must keep them fully posted. Raineri Biscia<sup>4</sup> was informed, when he came here last July, that we should be approaching the Germans in due course and he seemed to think this a natural step for us to take.

Yours ever,  
R. L. CRAIGIE

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> Sir J. Simon spoke to M. Corbin on February 21 about the recent naval negotiations and their probable future course. An account of this conversation was sent to Sir G. Clerk in Foreign Office despatch No. 445 of February 21 (see Volume XIII).

<sup>3</sup> Counsellor at the Italian Embassy in London.

<sup>4</sup> Captain Raineri Biscia was the Italian representative at the Anglo-Italian naval discussions in London in July 1934 (see Volume XIII).

No. 639

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 71 Telegraphic [C 2469/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 23, 1935, 2.35 p.m.*

I do not know whether there is any likelihood of the German Government before I arrive presenting you with a suggested programme for our talks. In case they do so I think you should say that you know it is my intention to begin by conveying to Chancellor Hitler the grave view which H.M.G. take of the European situation and the necessity of facing realities by considering how peace might be made more secure not only in Western but in Central and Eastern Europe and by enquiring what would be Germany's attitude and contribution. What I mean to imply is that we cannot consent

to be carried off into a prolonged discussion which may occupy most of the time on such portions of the London communiqué as are attractive to Germany, but we must insist upon going over the whole ground in due order. If you receive no preliminary intimation or enquiry on the subject of programme it would seem better to leave things alone till I arrive, and this message is only sent that you may be forearmed and may act upon it at your discretion if you feel that a conflicting German programme needs to be promptly challenged.

**No. 640**

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 23, 7 p.m.)*  
*No. 17 Telegraphic [C 2465/55/18]*

*Important*

WARSAW, March 23, 1935, 6.9 p.m.

My telegram No. 16.<sup>1</sup>

I am informed that Polish government decided last night to make representations at Berlin and instructions have now been sent to Polish Ambassador to call the attention of the German government to serious consequences which might result from their unilateral action.

I understand representations will be of a pro forma nature rather than that of protest and Polish Ambassador is likely to be given . . .<sup>2</sup> later on as to exact manner in which they should be made.

My United States colleague today informed member of my staff that Minister for Foreign Affairs had told him a communiqué would shortly be published in Polish press regarding démarche but that actual representations to be made by Polish Ambassador would not be so strong as the communiqué implied.

I gather that Polish government are greatly exercised by French appeal to Geneva<sup>3</sup> and are much hoping that your visit to Berlin will render League decision unnecessary.

Repeated to Paris, Moscow and Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> No. 636.

<sup>2</sup> The text is here uncertain.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 629.

**No. 641**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 23, 7.45 p.m.)*  
*No. 62 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2458/55/18]*

*Confidential*

PARIS, March 23, 1935

Following from Mr. Eden.

I saw Minister for Foreign Affairs alone this morning previous to our joint meeting with Signor Suvich.<sup>1</sup> Monsieur Laval had clearly been much relieved

<sup>1</sup> In his telegram No. 57 of March 21, telephoned to the Foreign Office for Mr. Eden at 3.38 p.m., Sir G. Clerk said that M. Laval would 'be grateful if you [Mr. Eden] could come



by decision to hold meeting of Ministers in Paris today but he did not conceal from me that he had been through some anxious days. In the interval which had elapsed between our reply to German Government and decision to hold today's meeting in Paris it had been difficult to restrain not only the French press but also a number of his colleagues. Now the situation would no doubt be restored but Minister for Foreign Affairs indicated that his task would have been considerably facilitated had we been able to give him earlier intimation of our projected note to Berlin.

2. Monsieur Laval . . .<sup>2</sup> that I would know that all his colleagues did not share his views of the conduct of foreign policy. Monsieur Herriot for instance was much more frank and violently anti-German; Minister for Foreign Affairs' position was certainly still strong but that section of the . . .<sup>3</sup> opinion which always clamoured for less British and French agreements had pressed him hard in the last few days.

3. I told Monsieur Laval that I could give him three definite assurances about our visit to Berlin. Firstly that its purpose was purely exploratory, secondly that scope of our conversations would be the scope of the London communiqué of 3rd February, thirdly that we should report fully and faithfully to French and Italian Governments upon the outcome of the visits to Berlin and the other capitals after their conclusion.

4. Monsieur Laval thanked me for these assurances and said that he felt confident that the symbol of solidarity afforded by today's meeting would prove most serviceable.

Repeated to Rome, Berlin, Brussels, Warsaw and Moscow.

to the Quai d'Orsay as soon as you arrive in order to have a talk with him and Suvich before the luncheon . . .<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The text is here uncertain. A printed text reads 'Monsieur Laval said that'.

<sup>3</sup> The text is here uncertain. A printed text reads 'section of French opinion'.

## No. 642

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 25)*

*No. 467 [C 2456/55/18]*

*Urgent*

PARIS, March 23, 1935

His Majesty's Representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit to him the Minutes of the meeting between British and French and Italian Ministers in Paris on March 23.

ENCLOSURE IN No. 642

*Notes of a meeting between French, British, and Italian Ministers at the Quai d'Orsay on the afternoon of March 23rd, 1935*

(Conversations took place between M. Laval, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eden, Lord Privy Seal, and Signor Suvich, Under-Secretary for Foreign

Affairs, in the morning and afternoon. These were for the most part conducted by the Ministers alone. Reports on these private talks have been sent by telegram.<sup>1</sup> The following is a record of that part of the conversation that took place in the presence of experts).

#### *Central European Pact*

M. Laval said that he had discussed the outlines of a Central European Pact with the Austrian Ministers and admired their courage in agreeing that Austrian independence should be protected by other states, including the Succession States. The recent *détente* between Italy and Yugoslavia<sup>2</sup> would make it easier to reach a common agreement. Germany, on the other hand, wished to gain time and prevent the finding of a formula for such a pact. He would wish the British Ministers, when in Berlin, to tell the German Government that they were anxious that Germany should not make difficulties. Anything they could do to persuade Germany not to be obstructive would be helpful.

Signor Suvich said that the German Government had put five questions to the Italian Government which the latter had answered.<sup>3</sup> Germany however was not satisfied with the answers. The Italian Government did not propose to pursue the matter in any further detail with the German Government at this stage. All that they wanted was that the German Government should agree in principle that such a pact was desirable, and that the details might be fixed later in concert with all other parties.

M. Laval suggested that occasion might be taken at the Extraordinary Session of the Council<sup>4</sup> in April for the interested parties to make some progress together with the elaboration of a Central European Pact.

#### *Eastern Pact*

M. Laval said that if he had not pressed the German Government for a reply this was out of consideration for the British Ministers. He did not wish to receive the German reply, which was certain to be negative, before the British visit had taken place. He understood that the German Government would be prepared to agree to a multilateral pact of non-aggression and consultation, and bilateral pacts of mutual assistance amongst other signatories, but would refuse to give assistance themselves. It was at the instance of Russia and the Little Entente that he had insisted upon the inclusion of the words 'mutual assistance' in the London communiqué. He did not go so far as to ask the British Ministers to go out of their way to make an active defence of the French conception of the pact at Berlin. He was prepared to believe that Germany was sincere in saying that she had no intention of making trouble in the West, but if she refused to give undertakings of mutual assistance in Eastern Europe, he was convinced that it was because she wished to make a *mauvais coup* there. If there was war in any part of Europe it could not be localised. Countries like Poland and Hungary, which were ambitious

<sup>1</sup> See No. 641, and Nos. 644 and 645 below.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 601, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> See *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 460 and 520.

<sup>4</sup> Of the League of Nations; cf. No. 629, note 3.

or dissatisfied, would intervene in order to achieve their ambitions. France had no common frontier with Russia and no particular sympathy with the Soviet régime, but it was her purpose to make agreements with all countries interested in the maintenance of the territorial clauses of the treaties. If the German Government said that all that they could undertake was an engagement of non-aggression and consultation, the British Ministers might say that the French Government could not accept this, but they could also assure the German Government that France was not aiming at the encirclement of Germany. In any pact which France made with other countries there would always be a blank page for Germany's signature. M. Laval added that he was determined to go on as quickly as possible with the conclusion of the two pacts. Progress with the Central European Pact could be made at Geneva in April. And as regards the Eastern Pact, he proposed to make some agreement with the Soviet Government and the Czechoslovak Government as soon as the German reply had been received.

Mr. Eden said that it was not for the British Ministers to tell the German Government that they ought to sign a pact drafted in particular terms. They could however urge upon the German Government that peace would not be secure unless the German Government made some contribution towards security in Eastern Europe. If the German Government did not like the Pact as at present contemplated he agreed that they should propose some constructive alternative.

M. Laval said that he had no desire to dictate what the terms of the Pact should be, and would do his best to make it easy for the Germans to take part.

#### *Demilitarised Zone*

M. Laval said that it was important that the three Governments should consider in advance the situation that would arise in the event of a violation of the demilitarised zone by Germany. He wished Mr. Eden and Signor Suvich to draw the attention of the British and Italian Governments to the apprehensions at present felt by the French Government on this score. If the idea should get abroad that Great Britain and Italy would be indifferent in the event of a violation of the demilitarised zone, it would not be long before a violation took place. The Germans would find some pretext or other, such as perhaps M. Laval's visit to Moscow, for committing some new act of unilateral violation. He hoped that the British Ministers would use very firm language to the German Government on this subject.

Signor Suvich indicated that he shared M. Laval's anxieties on this subject.

#### *The French appeal to the League of Nations*

M. Laval suggested that the Council might meet to consider this question on April 15th, and it was agreed that he should communicate with the President of the Council in this sense. The French Government would communicate their memorandum to the British and Italian Governments before

they sent it to the Council. They hoped that the text of a draft resolution for adoption by the Council might be considered during the Stresa<sup>5</sup> meeting. In the view of the French Government it was essential that there should be some condemnation by the Council of the principle of unilateral violation.

<sup>5</sup> i.e. during the suggested meeting of British, French, and Italian representatives in Northern Italy; see No. 634.

**No. 643**

*Letter from Mr. Atherton to Sir J. Simon (Received March 28)*<sup>1</sup>

[C 2582/55/18]

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES, LONDON, *March 23, 1935*

My dear Sir John:

I have received a personal telegram from Secretary Hull, dated March 22, which is really intended for you, and so I venture to quote it textually:<sup>2</sup>

‘Will you be good enough to thank Sir John Simon on my behalf for the full and frank way in which he discussed the present European situation with you with particular reference to British policy. I have taken occasion today to answer some inquiries of the Press and quote for your information the following excerpt from this afternoon’s Press Conference.

“The Secretary informed the correspondents in answer to their inquiries in regard to recent events in Europe that the Government in its foreign relations is proceeding on its usual normal course. He stated that the Government was of course following events in Europe with the utmost care and that the Department of State realizes that the situation is difficult and that the public here is really concerned over developments. The Secretary declared that everybody knows that the United States has always believed that treaties must constitute the foundation on which any stable peace structure must rest. He pointed out that all who believe in peaceful settlements of international problems of all kinds have felt increasing concern over tendencies to fail to live up to the letter and spirit of treaties. The Secretary expressed the belief that the moral influence of the United States and its people must always encourage living up to treaties. He stated that efforts now being made in Europe looking to an alleviation of the present tension will be closely followed by the American Government and expressed the hope that these efforts will succeed in their purpose of bringing about a general appeasement.”

(Signed) HULL.’

Every best wish for your journey, and the Ambassador asks me particularly to say he is looking forward to seeing you at lunch at 14 Prince’s Gate at 1.30 on Thursday next.<sup>3</sup>

Sincerely yours,  
RAY ATHERTON

<sup>1</sup> Date of filing in the Foreign Office.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram is printed in *F.R.U.S.* 1935, vol. i, pp. 204–5.

<sup>3</sup> March 28.

No. 644

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 24, 12.5 a.m.)*

*No. 64 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2460/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, March 24, 1935

Following from Mr. Eden.

I also had a conversation with Signor Suvich, whose language was not less forcible than that of Monsieur Flandin,<sup>1</sup> and indeed I have been impressed throughout the conversations today with the close unity of the Italian and French Ministers. If anything, Italian Minister seems more alarmed of the two. Signor Mussolini, Signor Suvich told me, insisted that agreement must be reached as to limits to be placed upon concessions to Germany and that agreement upheld. If Germany was to be allowed to continue to violate one engagement after another, in a very short time she would endeavour to absorb Austria, and that would mean war. It was essential in Signor Mussolini's view that the French, Italian and British Governments should 'take steps to immediately stop the rot' with the minimum delay. That was why Italy attached such importance to the meeting in Northern Italy taking place at the earliest possible moment.

Repeated to Berlin, Rome, Brussels, Moscow, Warsaw.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 645 below for Mr. Eden's conversation with M. Flandin. These two telegrams were telephoned in reverse order.

No. 645

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 24, 12.25 a.m.)*

*No. 63 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2459/55/18]*

*Immediate*

PARIS, March 24, 1935

Following from Mr. Eden.

I had long conversation with M. Flandin after ministerial lunch today,<sup>1</sup> during course of which his urgent and increasing anxiety at the pace and extent of German re-armament was the continuous theme. Monsieur Flandin said he was disappointed that His Majesty's Government had not reacted more strongly against Germany's unilateral denunciation of the Treaty of Versailles. As recently as February 3rd France had in the terms of the London communiqué made clear her willingness to substitute a fresh agreement for Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. Now Germany without waiting for this fresh agreement had unilaterally denounced her engagements. He was frankly sorry that His Majesty's Government had not more clearly drawn distinction between Germany's actual conduct and what might reasonably have been expected after the London communiqué.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. on March 23.

His present purpose was to emphasise the urgency of the present situation. Germany had begun in the last fortnight to re-arm at an even greater pace than hitherto. She was buying raw material from France in such quantities that the French Government were now having to consider whether they would not have to take special measures to prevent these exports. France was being denuded by these purchases, which were being paid for in cash. Monsieur Flandin had received information that within the last ten days Germany had ordered large consignments of nickel from Canada. Had His Majesty's Government any information about this, or if not, could we find out whether the report was true or not.<sup>2</sup>

Speaking more generally, Monsieur Flandin said that after results of Berlin conversations were over [*sic*], it would really be necessary that the Governments of Great Britain, France and Italy should make up their minds on the course of action they were going to pursue. What, for instance, were we going to do if Germany violated the demilitarised zone?<sup>3</sup> This would not be an action which would affect the Treaty of Versailles only, but also that of Locarno. He would not conceal from me that in the event of such violation there would be a demand in France that he should appeal to His Majesty's Government under the terms of the Locarno Treaty. What would our attitude be? Nothing could be more fatal than to allow matters to drift. Only hope of preventing international situation deteriorating still further was for the three Powers here named to determine definitely upon their course of action and to hold by it. When they had done this it might be possible to reinforce their decision by approval of the Council of the League. Time was the essential matter, and if this course was to be pursued, use should be made of the emergency meeting of the Council in April.

Repeated to Berlin, Rome, Moscow, Warsaw and Brussels.

<sup>2</sup> A minute by Mr. Baxter read: 'We can now reply on the nickel point; the rumour has been discovered to be unfounded. C. W. Baxter. 8/4.'

<sup>3</sup> In a minute of March 26 Mr. Sargent referred to the decision taken on this question by the Cabinet before the meeting with the French Ministers in February; cf. No. 366, paragraph 8 (f). He added that 'the question never was raised in the February conversations, but it is quite clear that it is going to be raised now.' Sir R. Vansittart agreed, and thought that the matter should be brought up at the first available Cabinet meeting. 'H.M.G. will have to make up their minds on this, and very quickly too. It is a most disagreeable necessity . . . R.V. March 26.'

## No. 646

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 24, 11.25 a.m.)*

*No. 65 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2461/55/18]*

PARIS, March 24, 1935

General satisfaction is displayed by the French press this morning at the results of yesterday's Franco-British-Italian meeting as defined in the com-

muniqué.<sup>1</sup> Emphasis is laid on its symbolic character; there is no exaggeration of its scope.

2. As regards your visit to Berlin the re-affirmation of its exploratory character and of the fact that it is still based on the declaration of February 3rd is appreciated, whilst the importance attached by His Majesty's Government to ascertaining on the spot the real intentions of Germany is brought out.

3. At the same time Signor Mussolini's declaration<sup>2</sup> yesterday that Italy's will for peace and collaboration was supported by some millions of bayonets, which is reported prominently, is regarded on all sides as a particularly apposite reminder.

Repeated to Berlin by Foreign Office No. 72.

<sup>1</sup> The short communiqué, issued by the press on the evening of Saturday, March 23, was printed in *The Times*, March 25, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid*.

## No. 647

*Sir R. Vansittart to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 73 Telegraphic [C 2527/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 25, 1935, 5.30 p.m.*

Following is text of telegram dated March 23rd from Prime Minister, Cape Town, to Union High Commissioner here. The High Commissioner and the Secretary of State for the Dominions ask that it should be communicated to the Secretary of State.<sup>1</sup> Begins.

Will you please bring to the notice of H.M. Government in the United Kingdom the following:—

H.M. Government in the Union of South Africa extremely regret to learn critical situation in Europe. They have, however, noted with relief independent decision come to by H.M. Government in the United Kingdom to adhere [?to] Sir John Simon's visit to Berlin.

H.M. Government in the Union of South Africa most strongly support object of that mission as set forth telegram from Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to me Circular B. 33 of March 21st, and sincerely hope H.M. Government in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland will under no circumstances accept a solution of present crisis other than a pacific settlement, the necessity for which they cannot emphasise too strongly. In

<sup>1</sup> A note by Mr. Perowne of March 25 said that the decode of this telegram had been brought round that morning from the Dominions Office, after an interview between Mr. J. H. Thomas, the Secretary of State for the Dominions, and Mr. de Water, the South African High Commissioner in London. Mr. Perowne noted that Mr. de Water had had an interview with Sir J. Simon at 12.45 p.m. on Saturday, March 23, but it was subsequently ascertained that he had not then shown the telegram to Sir J. Simon. He was, however, 'apparently very excited and talked and behaved in such a way as to indicate that the Union Government thought that war in Europe might be about to break out at any moment'.

a crisis of such gravity for Europe it seems essential that H.M. Government in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland should remain in a detached position as peacemaker and should not become involved in crisis. Ends.<sup>2</sup>

In a minute of March 26 Sir R. Vansittart wrote: 'I think the inspiration of this was in home quarters rather than Berlin, though the latter is possible. It w[oul]d, however, be a very long shot. In any case it is a foolish and uncalled-for telegram. . . .'

**No. 648**

*Sir R. Clive (Tokyo) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 25, 2.10 p.m.)*

*No. 87 Telegraphic [C 2494/55/18]*

**TOKYO, March 25, 1935, 9.10 p.m.**

German Ambassador formally notified Minister for Foreign Affairs under instructions from his government of Germany's intention to re-arm and introduce conscription.

Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me today that Minister for Foreign Affairs thanked German Ambassador for communication but offered no comment.

Japanese press has received news calmly and one almost suspects that they have been told to abstain from comment although tendency is to be sympathetic.

**No. 649**

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 30)*

*No. 133 [W 2834/10/98]*

**MOSCOW, March 25, 1935**

Sir,

The question of immediate or 'automatic' action under Pacts of Mutual Assistance appears to be a very important point which doubtless will need precise definition in the drawing-up of any such Pacts. It would seem to resolve itself mainly into the question—Would action be taken against an aggressor without previous reference to the Council of the League of Nations, or only after the latter had taken a decision?

2. The Western Aerial Pact proposed in the Anglo-French declaration of London was taken, in many quarters and certainly in the Soviet press, as implying immediate and *automatic* action in case of need. The 'Journal de Moscou'—the editorial articles of which emanate direct from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, remarked, on February 9th,—'Il tombe sous le sens que la riposte immédiate à l'agresseur sans avis préalable de la S. de N. augmentera considérablement l'efficacité de l'assistance mutuelle.'



3. My Italian colleague has told me in confidence of an interesting conversation which he had quite recently with M. Litvinov on the subject of the latter's proposed Eastern Pact of Mutual Assistance, during which he asked M. Litvinov what he expected from such assistance, and was there, effectively and in practice, any distinction between 'immediate' and 'automatic' action? I gather that M. Litvinov replied, without any hesitation, that in his opinion the London agreement had added to the notion of mutual assistance an element of 'automatic action' which in fact he (Litvinov) was now trying to invoke for use in the Eastern Pact. The London declaration, he added, although paying due respect to the League in its preamble, had made not the slightest mention of it when dealing with the Air Pact. The Italian Ambassador then asked what, in the event of a sudden attack upon Russia, M. Litvinov would conceive to be the action of immediate assistance. The latter appears to have been for a moment unusually embarrassed, but replied that one would proceed, of course, to regular consultation among the signatories of the Pact, *without referring to Geneva*, and then at once enter into action.

4. I should think, however, that it is doubtful whether France would be prepared to follow this conception of immediate assistance, or even whether the Soviet Union would ever actually put it into practice. I cannot believe that M. Litvinov really allows himself to think of the eventuality of the Red Army leaving its frontiers to go to attack or to defend Germany. I am more inclined to think that, in his insistence upon immediate mutual assistance, he is reckoning upon the political and moral support to be derived from this obligation and upon its deterrent effect upon a would-be aggressor.

5. On this question of the definition of immediate assistance there are other points which may need consideration and clarification. The proposals for the Eastern Pact at the very outset (Part Ia) contain the obligation '*in conformity with the Covenant, immediately to lend assistance*', etc. This might almost be regarded as a contradiction in terms, if the immediate nature of the assistance were to exclude a previous decision of the League Council. Moreover, as far as France's attitude in such a question is concerned, the French Government, in replying on January 15th<sup>1</sup> to German apprehensions as to an automatic and military character in this assistance to be rendered and as to the precise procedure for determining who was to receive the assistance, said they did not regard the scheme as providing for any '*automatic*' but only '*immediate*' assistance: that the precision of this would be left to negotiation: that the pact would be based on the principles of the League of Nations (i.e. presumably that the Council would play its part); and that the previous consultation of signatories, expressly provided for, would constitute a guarantee against unforeseen risks of automatic action.

6. The considerations to which I have called attention in regard to the Eastern Pact of Security are of course based on the idea of the inclusion in it of Germany and of Poland. Without these two Powers any such Pact would appear to be a totally different affair. The proposed pact excluded any

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 342, note 1.

action (except consultation) against aggression by a non-signatory State and provided only for the *neutrality* of signatories in such a case. Thus, if Germany and Poland were out of it (and in that case the Baltic States would hardly be anxious to enter the Pact) it is difficult to see—as I have often remarked to M. Litvinov—what value the Pact would have to Russia. It seems that a pact between only Russia, France and Czechoslovakia would have to have quite a different basis to that originally proposed.

I have, &c.,  
CHILSTON

No. 650

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir R. Vansittart (Received March 26, 10.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 139 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2531/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, March 26, 1935

Following from Secretary of State:—

The Ambassador, Mr. Eden and I had yesterday two conversations—each of three hours duration—with Chancellor and Baron von Neurath.

Herr Hitler left us to begin and I presented in very firm terms our view as to choice before Germany in the sense of first part of Cabinet instruction of March 20th.<sup>1</sup> We questioned German Ministers on

- (1) The Eastern Pact,
- (2) The Danubian Pact,
- (3) Germany's attitude to the League of Nations.

(1) Eastern Pact. The Chancellor was prepared to conclude bilateral Pacts of non-aggression with the Powers concerned including Russia and to include these Pacts in a multilateral Pact: he would agree to consult and to guarantee not to assist the aggressor but he was definite that Germany could not give mutual assistance and equally definite that she could not agree to inclusion in any Eastern Pact of provisions for mutual assistance as between other Powers i.e. particularly France and Russia.

Feature of this part of the conversation was the immense emphasis laid by the Chancellor on increasing armed strength and menace of Russia. He

<sup>1</sup> The relevant section read: 'The Cabinet agreed—

(a) Generally, that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should make clear to Herr Hitler the reasons for his visit to Berlin and the object of British policy, namely, to secure co-operation between the various countries of Europe, including regional Pacts as opposed to the division of Europe into two camps, which was threatened by Herr Hitler's policy. He should not hesitate, at the appropriate moment, which might come early in the conversations, to bring home to Herr Hitler, crisply but firmly, the consequences of his recent announcements as affecting the prospects of peace on a co-operative basis. He should discuss with Herr Hitler the various questions raised in the Anglo-French *Communiqué* of February 3rd, with a view to subsequent progress in such matters as the Central European Pact, the Eastern Pact, an Armaments Agreement, the proposed Aerial Agreement, and the return of Germany to the League of Nations.'

spoke of 20,000–30,000 Russian military aeroplanes in ten years' time and 16 to 18 million men.

(2) Danubian Pact. Chancellor claimed that there was no necessity for Germany to give any non-interference agreement to Austria. He would give a non-aggression Pact but why should he give an agreement respecting non-interference which was notoriously impossible definition? No one suggested a non-interference agreement for Germany despite unceasing propaganda of her emigrés in foreign countries. If certain countries wanted a non-interference agreement for Austria let them draft it themselves and Germany would consider it. But present proposal was too vague and it was not for German Government to suggest an alternative as they were not interested.

(3) League of Nations. Chancellor said that separation of Covenant from Treaty of Versailles would have a certain technical importance; but real difficulty was inequality and inferiority of Germany—was Germany to re-enter the League without colonies and Japan to stay outside with mandates over former German colonies? Perhaps former German colonies held by Britain, British Dominions and France were not of great economic or financial value and would not be of great value to Germany. But without colonies Germany's position in the world was inequitable. If we would cede colonies we would bind Germany to us: and even the British Empire might need help to defend its colonies one day.

I made it abundantly clear that I could hold out no hope of satisfaction being given Germany on this point.

Conversation will be continued this morning.

## No. 651

*Notes of Anglo-German Conversations, held at the Chancellor's Palace, Berlin, on March 25 and 26, 1935<sup>1</sup>*

[C 2580/55/18]\*

Present:

*United Kingdom*

SIR JOHN SIMON, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

MR. EDEN, Lord Privy Seal.

SIR ERIC PHIPPS, His Majesty's Ambassador, Berlin.

MR. STRANG, Foreign Office.

MR. WIGRAM, Foreign Office.

<sup>1</sup> These Notes, copy received from the Cabinet as C.P. 69 (35) on March 27, were later printed in Foreign Office Confidential Print. Copies were sent to Berlin, Paris, and Rome on March 29, to Brussels and Moscow on March 30, to The Hague on April 9. Herr Schmidt's memorandum on the conversations and Baron von Neurath's account are printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 555 and 564.

*Germany*

HERR HITLER, Chancellor and 'Führer'.

BARON VON NEURATH, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

HERR VON RIBBENTROP, Special Commissioner for Disarmament Questions.

HERR VON KOTZE, Baron von Neurath's Private Secretary.

HERR SCHMITT [SCHMIDT], Interpreter.

FIRST MEETING

*March 25, 1935, at 10.30 a.m.*

*Preliminary*

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he and Mr. Eden were very glad to be in Berlin and that he himself much welcomed making Herr Hitler's acquaintance.

He would first ask to make a short general statement before entering upon the discussion of the list of topics which Baron Neurath and he had agreed upon.

The British Ministers gladly accepted the proposal for bi-lateral discussion made in the note from the German Government of the 14th February,<sup>2</sup> and were happy to carry consultation a stage further on all the matters indicated in the London Declaration of the 3rd February. As he wished to speak frankly, he would say that there had been difficulties in undertaking the present visit as a result of the new developments in the course of the preceding 10 days. He did not desire to discuss these events, against which we had protested, but he and Mr. Eden had come in spite of them. It was an important decision to take, but they had thought it worth taking for the sake of coming into personal contact with the Head of the German Government. They were glad to note that the scope and purpose of the conversations would be as previously agreed.

Sir John Simon said that he wished to present to the Chancellor on behalf of His Majesty's Government the view which His Majesty's Government and the British people took of the present situation, and to describe the anxiety that occupied their minds. The object of British policy was to preserve general peace by helping to secure co-operation amongst all European countries. His Majesty's Government most earnestly wished that Germany should work with all countries for that object. They felt that the future of Europe would take one of two forms. It would either take the form of general co-operation for securing continued peace—and this was the form which His Majesty's Government earnestly desired. Or it would take the form of a division into two camps—isolation on the one side, and combination (which might look like encirclement) on the other. The message which he had to deliver on behalf of His Majesty's Government was that they were convinced that the future would develop in one of these two ways. They wished to do

<sup>2</sup> See No. 446.

all in their power in co-operation with Germany in order to secure that it would be the first and not the second development which would occur. He would conclude this preliminary general statement by giving his own account of the state of British opinion.

British opinion looked upon the situation as follows. People in England had been very greatly disturbed by a series of acts on the part of Germany—he did not wish to discuss the question whether these acts were justified or not, but merely to report the fact. The withdrawal of Germany from Geneva, events relating to Austria, and the recent unilateral announcement connected with the rearmament now going on at a great pace in Germany, these all made it difficult for the British Ministers to fulfil their engagement to come to Berlin. The result of these events was that public opinion in England was doubtful, and was trying anxiously to estimate what was the real course of German policy. Sir John Simon thought it right to say this frankly because Great Britain was a country where the general opinion of the people was of great importance, and where the spirit and character of the people made it important for the future of Europe that their opinion should be taken into account. The British people was not anti-German; but it was very strongly opposed to any policy or to any country which was likely to disturb the peace. Germany ought to recognise that it was British influence which had operated to improve the situation in the past: he would instance reparations, the evacuation of the Rhineland, the declaration regarding equality of rights, and the arrangements for the Saar. This was evidence that the British people had tried to be fair and just. But the present situation was one in which the British people were in doubt. They were quite prepared to pay proper attention to authoritative statements that German policy was directed towards peace. They would take Herr Hitler's word for it. What they were anxious to discover was whether there was any line of action which Germany would find it possible to take, in co-operation with other Governments, in order to persuade friendly peoples and Governments that they would be justified in abandoning their attitude of doubt and in throwing their energies into the work of co-operation with other European countries, including Germany.

Sir John Simon emphasised that he had not come to Berlin to produce any cut and dried plan. He well understood the objection to presenting such plans. They were at the stage of free and frank consultation, and the Chancellor would understand why he had thought it well to speak firmly. The British Ministers believed that the Chancellor and the German Government attached importance to British opinion, and they gladly seized the present opportunity to improve the relations between the two countries and to secure peace.

HERR HITLER said he wished Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden to be assured that the German Government and people were happy to receive them. He saw in the present visit the first great possibility of reaching understanding through direct conversations, which could not be replaced by exchange of notes or by communications through third parties. At the time of Mr. Eden's

visit a year before, it had been possible to clarify a number of questions. The present visit would give a true picture of what the German people and the German Government wanted and could do, and of what they did not want and could not do and would never do. On a historic occasion like the present, it was useless not to speak with absolute frankness.

SIR JOHN SIMON agreed.

HERR HITLER continued by saying that he met the representatives of Great Britain as a man who had had no part in past events such as the outbreak, the conduct and the conclusion of the War. He would therefore approach current problems with impartiality and objectivity, and in a more unbiased manner than probably any other European statesman could do.

He emphasised in the first place that the first and only great aim of his policy was to revive and make happy a people stricken by immeasurable disaster. This was his life's work. He could solve it if he succeeded in combining the revival of the German people with the preservation of peace and the avoidance of a repetition of the disaster. The revival had three aspects, economic, political and moral.

This policy was in accordance with the mandate received from the German nation, and he must have the confidence of the people, for only so could he speak with authority to foreign representatives. It was a mistake to think that there was in Germany a dictatorship which violated the will of the people. The German Government were mandatories. Like the British Government, they depended upon the will and action of the German people. It was therefore clearly impossible for him to pursue any policy which the German people did not support. His political acts during the last two years has been willed and approved by the German people, just as all his future acts would likewise be willed by the German people.

Turning to Sir John Simon's observation about the two alternative courses of developments in Europe, Herr Hitler referred to the three aspects of his task. The development which the German Government and people ardently desired was along the line of solidarity and co-operation. He felt bound to point out that the experience of the past 15 years had been a bitter one. Such co-operation as the German people desired was only realisable with the disappearance of a psychosis which had been inherited from the War and was a burden upon every kind of co-operation. Such co-operation had, he might almost say, been contractually made impossible because of the absence of true equality between the parties. Any attempt to organise co-operation in conditions of inequality could not succeed and would destroy any results achieved in the past.

True solidarity required that the objects of policy should not be a menace to other States, or an attempt to annul their existence. The object of German policy, in its new political conception, was not a menace to anyone. It was a pity that people abroad had not sufficiently studied the spiritual foundation of this new conception. What was often made a reproach was, in fact, a guarantee against menace from attack. National Socialism had no expansive character. National Socialism was born from the distress of the German

nation and was intended to apply to the German nation alone. It was not designed for export beyond the limits of the German people. There were, indeed, a number of other conceptions abroad which were designed to conquer the minds of other peoples. This was one of the most serious threats to solidarity and co-operation in Europe. This threat was not a matter of theory only—he had himself been fighting for 15 years to defend the German people against such foreign ideas. This threat was still actively in existence and all European nations were menaced by the danger of infection. This, the chief danger to European co-operation, did not come from Germany. In accordance with their own new doctrine, the German people had no interest in pursuing an imperialist policy. Germany was surrounded by national States which were either as densely populated as Germany herself, or inhabited by intensely nationalistic peoples. To say that Germany intended to tear away territory from others was to disregard the difficulties of the economic situation from which Germany was at present suffering. His problem was to find an economic basis for the life of 60 million people. Annexation of territory would merely add to the political and economic difficulties with which he was faced. The annexation of other countries where the economic difficulties were greater than in Germany would not solve Germany's economic problem. The German Government had not taken a single step which could be interpreted as a territorial menace to other countries.

As regards the uneasiness in England to which Sir John Simon had referred, Herr Hitler said that the measures in question had been required for the achievement of the Chancellor's third task, namely, moral rehabilitation and reconstruction of the German people. Economic measures had a purely internal character, except in so far as they were connected with international trade. Then again, political reconstruction, the creation of a new constitution for Germany in keeping with the tradition and character of the people, need be of no interest to the outside world. Incidentally, foreign peoples ought not to accept stories about Germany spread by self-styled political martyrs of whom the German Government were only too glad to be rid. The measures taken for moral rehabilitation, however, were not to be understood merely by references to contractual engagements, but by putting oneself in Germany's place. If England had been as unlucky as Germany since 1914, every Englishman would have acted exactly as the Chancellor had done. If importance was attached to co-operation with the German nation, and if there was an invitation to Germany to participate in more international agreements, these agreements could only have a sense and meaning if the Government which concluded them had a mandate from the German nation. It was because the German Government had a mandate for the moral rehabilitation of Germany that they could speak in Germany's name. That was the Chancellor's strength. The German people were convinced that he would do his utmost to bring about the moral rehabilitation of Germany. If there were any doubt upon this point in Germany, that would be his destruction. This German Government and every German Government could make

concessions or sacrifices for the sake of European co-operation, but there was one field in which they could make no concession, namely, where the rehabilitation of their honour was concerned.

The Chancellor then turned to the acts which were regarded as disturbing by British public opinion. The decision to withdraw from the League had been approved by 94 per cent. of the German nation. He was convinced that in similar circumstances Great Britain would have done the same, and, in fact, would never have joined the League at all. The League of Nations was acceptable to Germany and would become so<sup>3</sup> as soon as she could participate with absolutely equal rights. Germany did not wish to disturb European solidarity but to collaborate with equal rights.

Turning to Austria, the Chancellor said that Germany did not threaten, and had never threatened, Austria. He could not, however, forget that the régime in Austria was in contradiction with the overwhelming majority of the people over which it maintained power; from this many difficulties resulted. Germany could not co-operate with a Government which, both at home and abroad, insulted the German Government and the German ideal.

The same was true of Lithuania. Germany did not wish for a conflict with Lithuania. But it was not to be expected that Germany could look on with equanimity while a small State oppressed 100,000 Germans whose sole misfortune was that they had been born Germans. As soon as the situation was clarified by international agreement, no one would be happier than Germany. She had no desire to interfere by violence or force.

As regards armaments, Germany had been accused of violating the Treaty. If he had been Chancellor in 1919, he would never have signed the Treaty of Versailles. He would rather have died. A weak Government and a disheartened people had been forced to accept it under pressure. Germany would respect the territorial clauses of the Treaty, however terrible they might be for Germany. But as regards moral defamation, that they would never accept. Those parts of the Treaty which defamed Germany were themselves immoral. He had never concealed his view on this point, and had always promised that he would liberate the German people from these clauses. He recalled that on an earlier occasion Germany had had to violate a treaty. In 1806, Napoleon had imposed a treaty on Germany. But on the evening of Waterloo, Wellington did not protest when the Prussian army arrived, although that army could only arrive in violation of a treaty.

The Chancellor emphasised that Germany had no interest in sabotaging co-operation between other nations. He saw it stated in the press that Germany intended to separate Great Britain from France, and that this was why the British Ministers had been invited to come to Berlin. He would recall that he had invited France five times to take part in separate talks. He had made a solemn declaration after the Saar plebiscite that there were no further territorial differences dividing the two countries. France had not

<sup>3</sup> The text here appears to be corrupt. The corresponding passage in Herr Schmidt's memorandum (cf. note 1) read: 'A League of Nations would be a desirable place for Germany, if she could take her seat there as a nation with completely equal rights.'



done anything of this kind after 1870. Nevertheless, France had merely noted, and had sent no reply. On the contrary, French Ministers preferred to go to Moscow. He had invited Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden in order to establish direct contact; he had no desire to disturb European co-operation. He was glad that the British Ministers had come and that they had come as 'loyal and honest brokers', as an English newspaper had put it. He asked them to understand what were the feelings of a country which, in a situation of isolation, had suffered unprecedented humiliation for twenty years. He was prepared to make concessions, except where honour was concerned. If he made concessions on this latter point, he would no longer be Chancellor, and he was not sure whether this would be a help to European pacification.

SIR JOHN SIMON thanked the Chancellor for his full and clear exposition. He was convinced from the experience of that morning that the Chancellor was right when he said that direct contacts were capable of doing more than exchanges of despatches. There was only one point on which the Chancellor appeared to be under some misapprehension. He had spoken more than once as if the British people were unable to understand the motives which had led to the determined efforts on the part of Germany to rehabilitate herself in the moral sphere and in other spheres. He would say most definitely that if the Chancellor thought this, he was quite wrong. The British people understood quite well, and it was because they did understand, that they were anxious to see whether they could find some basis of co-operation with Germany on a footing of real equality. It was not past events which determined the situation, but the decision which might be reached at present in collaboration with Germany and other States for the immediate future. The British people harboured no resentment. They were a practical people with generous instincts, and that was why they wished to use the present opportunity to the full. He was grateful to the Chancellor for his reference to the absurd idea that the invitation was an attempt to separate France from Great Britain. This would be exactly contrary to the British conception of European co-operation. Faithful to this conception, His Majesty's Government thought it essential to devote themselves to the tasks of the immediate future, in collaboration with France and other nations.

Sir John Simon asked whether they might now turn to the separate questions for discussion.

HERR HITLER agreed.

### *Eastern Pact*

SIR JOHN SIMON said that in these circumstances he would explain the British Government's position with regard to the Eastern Pact.

When the Eastern Pact was first proposed last summer, the British Government made it clear that they had several criticisms to make. Their interest in the proposed pact was due to the fact that they did not see how European peace and solidarity were to be assured unless in the East of Europe there was some additional contribution to security by means of the co-operation of the Powers in that region.

In Western Europe there was Locarno, and the British Government were glad to know that the obligations and rights of Locarno were recognised and affirmed in their fullest sense by the Chancellor and by the German Government. In Western Europe then there was that element of solidarity.

As regards an Eastern arrangement, it seemed to Sir John Simon that there were three elements to be considered:—

- (1) A Covenant of non-aggression between the Powers participating in the Eastern Pact;
- (2) Provision for consultation between those Powers if any one of them thought that the Covenant of non-aggression was in danger of being disregarded;
- (3) Provisions for mutual assistance.

The position of the British Government was as follows: They believed that they were contributing to the solidarity of Europe in making their criticisms of the original proposals; and its outline was to some extent modified to meet their criticisms. They had formed and expressed the view that they would like to see such a pact concluded; and the British Ministers present in Berlin that day would be glad to learn from the Chancellor how Germany regarded the suggested pact under the three heads of—

- (1) Non-aggression;
- (2) Consultation;
- (3) Mutual assistance.

HERR HITLER said that he had already declared that, according to all the possibilities of human anticipation, the German Government had nothing to expect from warlike developments. He himself and the German military experts considered that a new European war must have terrible repercussions. From the military point of view it was now necessary to take account of air forces; and from that point of view Germany was more threatened than certain countries on the Eastern confines of Europe. Those countries with large open spaces were not as vulnerable as Germany with her densely populated industrial areas. Germany was 95 per cent. more vulnerable than those countries. Therefore Germany was the country most interested in the preservation of peace.

The object of the Eastern Pact was to secure peace or, in other words, to prevent war.

Here the question arose as to the possible parties to any war in Eastern Europe. Such a war, for example, might be between—

Germany and Poland;  
Russia and Germany;  
Russia and the Baltic States;  
Poland and the Baltic States;  
Germany and the Baltic States;  
Poland and Czechoslovakia;  
Germany and Czechoslovakia.

As regards the practical probability of war between any of these groups of Powers, Herr Hitler wished to observe that Germany and Russia had no common frontier and therefore there would be no war; there would be no war between Germany and Poland because of the non-aggression pact between the two Powers;<sup>4</sup> again, Russia and Poland had a non-aggression pact<sup>5</sup> which was still good for eight or nine years; war between the Baltic States and Russia could, Herr Hitler thought, be excluded because there were to a large degree non-aggression pacts;<sup>6</sup> war between Germany and Czechoslovakia could be excluded because there was an arbitration agreement.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore the real possibilities of conflict in those regions of Europe were limited.

But there was another question as to which Powers might declare war on other Powers in those regions. It was impossible to suppose that the Baltic States would declare war on Russia, or that Poland would declare war on Russia.

Further, Herr Hitler could give the British Ministers the assurance that Germany would never declare war on Russia.

He had not the same conviction as regards Russia. He thought that there was an aggressive tendency in Russia to-day. The Bolshevik theory and the aims of the Soviet Government were identical. He had many press extracts which confirmed this impression. He did not believe that the old mentality of the bolshevism of fifteen years ago had changed. Further, the Russian population had a certain hostile tendency against Poland. Therefore political tendencies and the national objective seemed in the case of Russia to complete one another.

It might seem that the Russian anxiety for the Eastern Pact contradicted this assumption. But Herr Hitler thought that Russia's desire in this matter was to have a freer hand in the Far East; and he thought that after the situation in the Far East had been liquidated Russia would show less anxiety to have an Eastern Pact.

They were discussing very frankly that day and therefore he was giving a frank opinion. It was not a question of whether or not he was right; but he wanted the British Ministers to know what his ideas were.

Herr Hitler repeated that because of the combination of Bolshevik doctrines with the political aims of Russia and because of the strength of the Russian military and economic organisation, it seemed to him that from Russia there was greater probability of war than from other countries.

Moreover, the risks for Russia in a possible war were smaller than those for other Powers. Russia could with impunity allow the occupation of great tracts of her territory as large as Germany; she could permit bombardment of great regions; she could therefore wage war without risking destruction.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 1, note 5.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 111.

<sup>6</sup> See *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 125, pp. 890-3; vol. 135, pp. 478-80 and 638-40 respectively for the Treaties of Non-Aggression between the Soviet Union and (a) Lithuania, of September 28, 1926, renewed May 6, 1931; (b) Estonia, of May 4, 1932; (c) Latvia, of February 5, 1932.

<sup>7</sup> Signed at Locarno on October 16, 1925; see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 122, pp. 288-9.

The German Government were convinced that security in Eastern Europe would be increased by the conclusion of non-aggression pacts; and they had taken the initiative *vis-à-vis* Poland; they would extend these non-aggression pacts to other Powers with the exception of Lithuania.

But Herr Hitler wished to be clear why he refused a non-aggression pact to Lithuania. His refusal did not mean that he wanted war with Lithuania; but that he could not conclude a non-aggression pact with a Power who treated her German minority as Lithuania did. If the guarantor Powers would bring Lithuania back to a legal basis, then the obstacle from the German side to the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Lithuania would have disappeared.

Herr Hitler desired to assure the British Ministers that he did not want war with Lithuania; and that he would not risk war with her on behalf of the comparatively few Germans in Memel. But he would not give Lithuania a non-aggression pact unless she respected her obligations. If Great Britain and the other Powers wanted a non-aggression pact for Lithuania, then they must make her observe her obligations.

MR. EDEN said that the Chancellor had spoken of the menace of Bolshevism. It seemed to the British Ministers that the menace of communism was an internal rather than an international problem. No doubt the Communist leaders would like other countries to adopt their creed; but it was improbable that they would go to war for that.

The country which had most to do at home was Russia, who had great territories to develop. Further, he would not have thought that a nation could win a war by the air weapon alone; and he would not have thought that Russia was a military menace for many years. But if there was such a danger, was it not exactly such an arrangement as that which they had in mind for strengthening the solidarity of Europe which could best meet it?

The British Ministers fully accepted the Chancellor's assurance respecting Germany's attitude to Russia. He was sure that the Chancellor would not mind his mentioning the fact that one element in the fear of Russia for Germany was what was known as 'Herr Rosenberg's plan'.<sup>8</sup> That plan was one of the elements in Russia's fear of Germany. (At this point the Chancellor and Baron von Neurath smiled.)

The interest of Britain in this matter was to secure a European Eastern settlement as useful as Locarno had proved to be. The British Ministers did not know enough to enter into the details of such an arrangement; but they were confident that there could be no general settlement without it.

Mr. Eden wished to ask the Chancellor one further question. Would he be willing to include his bilateral pacts in a multilateral settlement?

HERR HITLER said that, when he had referred to the Russian menace, he had not meant to suggest that European co-operation and solidarity were unnecessary. He was firmly convinced that one day that co-operation and solidarity would be urgently necessary to defend Europe against the Asiatic

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 484.

and Bolshevik menace. He thought that Russia saw in Germany the champion of Europe against that menace, as Germany saw in Poland the bulwark against that menace.

If he was wrong, Europe would be all the happier; but if he was right, it was necessary to take account of the possibility.

He agreed with Mr. Eden that the air arm could not decide a war, certainly not a war against Russia; though an air attack might be much more serious for Germany, England or France.

As to the value of Russian land armaments, he thought they had a great value and that they were very important. Fifteen years ago Russia had had no army. Ten years ago she had begun to reconstruct; and five years ago she had a considerable army. To-day she had a very strong army; in five years she would be still stronger; and in ten years she might have 20,000 to 30,000 military aeroplanes and 20,000 tanks and 16 to 18 million men under arms.

Her war industry was very favourably situated. It was safe from bombing attack and invasion; and this conviction was shared by the German military experts. Whatever might be said about German military officers, at least they knew their business. In ten years' time, then, Russia would be a very formidable Power.

Mr. Eden had asked him if he would include his bilateral pacts in a multilateral system. The German Government had no objection except as regards Lithuania, with whom a pact would only be possible when she respected her legal obligations.

SIR JOHN SIMON enquired as regards Lithuania and Memel whether he rightly understood that, when Herr Hitler said he would be prepared to include his bilateral pacts in a multilateral arrangement, but made an exception in the case of Lithuania, that was not an exception of principle but because of the difficulties about Memel.

Was the Chancellor willing, in principle, to include Lithuania in a bilateral pact? If that was so, it would be most useful to the British Government to know it because of any efforts which they might make to secure that Lithuania returned to the proper regard of her obligations.

HERR HITLER replied in the affirmative.

He turned to the point of consultation; and said that the German Government were ready to accept consultation as part of an Eastern Pact if difficulties arose.

As regards the third point, that of mutual assistance, that was the centre of the difficulty. The practical realisation of mutual assistance depended upon which Power was considered to be the aggressor.

It would take about 20 years to define the aggressor. In the last war people in England were firmly convinced that Germany was the aggressor; and in Germany people were equally convinced that France and Russia were the aggressors.

There would never be agreement on points of that kind. Many honourable Germans would swear that in their deepest conviction Germany had no

responsibility for the outbreak of war; and as many honourable Englishmen and Frenchmen would swear in the opposite sense. Therefore it was impossible to agree on that point. Where could they find the wisdom of a Solomon who could reach in a moment a decision on the question of the definition of the aggressor.

The German object was to avoid war. Herr Hitler feared that the only result of mutual assistance would be better to organise war.

Herr Hitler considered that mutual assistance was nothing else but what there had been in the pre-war treaties. What were the *Entente cordiale* and the Triple Alliance but defensive agreements to defend the parties against an aggressor; but they had launched the world into a terrible war. Mutual assistance would merely serve to organise war. It gave the appearance of respectability to those who wanted allies.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that there was a difference between the philosophy of mutual assistance and the old pre-war system exemplified by the *Entente* or the Triple Alliance.

Herr Hitler might be right in his criticisms of the new system; but it was certainly not the old pre-war system. The difference was that under the old system three Powers agreed to operate together against external attack. The essence of the new system was not a combination of numbers to stand against external danger; but the agreement of the Powers concerned to restrain the wrongful act of one of their number.

That was the essence of Locarno and that was why the British Government thought Locarno useful. Herr Hitler might be right if he objected to both systems; but the two systems were not the same.

HERR HITLER accepted this criticism, but said that it must not be forgotten that the conclusion of pacts of mutual assistance did not remove the divergence of interest between the parties. Under cover of these pacts the differences might go on.

During the last fifteen years a certain practice had established itself, under which, when two countries quarrelled and there was a great difference in their strength, it was the general custom to take the side of the stronger and to help the stronger, and to make the weaker give way. That was done to preserve peace and avoid war. But that practice (which was followed even by the League of Nations) resulted from the fact that the stronger Power had the opportunity of attacking the weaker, but that all the same it got the help of the other Powers.

The question of the definition of the aggressor was one of the utmost importance. It was indispensable that it should be possible to define the aggressor beyond all doubt; for under the proposed mutual assistance he himself might have to lead the German people to war if other Powers were quarrelling.

Under the proposed system he would have to undertake to lead millions of Germans to war; and he would not know which of the Powers was right and which was wrong. In the East there would be a great difference between the proposed system and Locarno, which was limited to a few countries

whose main difficulties were known. Those countries lived together with common frontiers.

It would be very difficult in the East, where there were many countries with complicated situations. They were faced in the East with an agglomeration of countries with problems which were difficult to understand; and there was, moreover, a constant change of the governing personnel. There were, in fact, possibilities of conflicts the causes of which it would be hard to fathom.

Moreover, the participants in Locarno had a greater sense of their responsibilities and realised more clearly what was at stake.

It would be very difficult for him to lead the German people to bloodshed and war when he was not clear about the problems at stake or what Germany would be fighting for.

He could do this all the less because he had solemnly given up Alsace-Lorraine; it must be remembered that Alsace-Lorraine had originally been German, and that it had been retaken by Germany after a terrible war and then lost by Germany after another even more terrible war.

Now he had given up his claim to Alsace-Lorraine for the sake of peace; but, having done that, how could he bring the German people into a new war and impose upon them all the sacrifices which would be involved when the questions at issue would be quite foreign to Germany?

He did not know if an English statesman would lead his country to war for problems which had nothing to do with England.

If a German statesman signed an Eastern Pact including a mutual assistance system, he would be exceeding the mandate given him by the German nation. Then, if serious circumstances arose, such a treaty would be valueless. For if he signed anything he wanted to be sure he could keep to it and stick to it. He could not undertake to lead Germany to war for problems of the kind which would be involved under a mutual assistance system in the East.

What else was involved in this mutual assistance system? It was thought that, in certain circumstances, Germany would receive help from Russia against France, or help from France against Russia. But he must make it clear that nobody in Germany wanted to be protected by Russia. They were more afraid of Russian protection than of a French attack.

If they were to receive an assurance of assistance from Britain, that would be welcome, and British troops on German soil would be very welcome, but certainly not Bolshevik troops. He said that as one who had seen Bolshevism in Germany.

If he called in the Bolsheviks to protect Germany, that would be like opening a box of pestilence germs at the front. The object would be to kill the enemy, but the germs would destroy one's own troops as well.

Therefore Germany did not want Russia's protection.

Further, he could not tell a National Socialist to fight for Bolshevism. That would be like inviting the Pope or the Catholic Church to send their monks to help Buddhism or Mohammedanism.

Some things were impossible, and to invite National Socialists to fight for Bolsheviks was impossible.

He could not sign such an agreement. National Socialists could not fight for the Bolsheviks; and he thought the British Government would understand that.

But he might be prepared to take negative measures and to say that no party to the proposed pact should give assistance to an aggressor.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

## SECOND MEETING

*March 25, 1935, at 4 p.m.*

### *Eastern Pact—(continued)*

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he would raise one question about the Eastern Pact which he had not put during the morning meeting. He quite understood Herr Hitler's contemplated multilateral pact of non-aggression and consultation, and Herr Hitler had explained why Germany could not favour being a party to a pact of mutual assistance in the East. But supposing it were possible to frame a multilateral pact of non-aggression and consultation, might it not be that some of the other parties to the multilateral pact might wish to enter into agreements of mutual assistance as between themselves, Germany not herself offering to assist? This was a possible development. While His Majesty's Government were not, of course, directly concerned, the British Ministers thought that it would be useful to obtain some information. What would the German view be if such a situation presented itself?

HERR HITLER thought that the idea was dangerous and objectionable. If within the Eastern Pact a group were to conclude a separate agreement of mutual assistance, this would be an exact copy of the pre-war system. It would not be a general system, but special group interests within the wider system. There would be two groups within the general arrangement, namely, those who were parties only to obligations of non-aggression and consultation, and those who were parties to obligations of mutual assistance. It was unlikely that if a conflict were to arise between a member of the first group and a member of the second group, an impartial decision could be reached. The decision would probably be in accordance with the weight behind the two several groups. The parties to the obligations of mutual assistance could not be expected to take an impartial decision, but would be bound by their special obligations. This would be an exact reproduction of the military alliances before the war. Although they were called defensive, they involved an extension of the conflagration, with the result that there was a world-wide conflict out of all proportion to the point of departure. It was necessary to localise conflicts and prevent them from spreading, and to give members of consultative pacts time during which to consult.

There was a further possible consequence. There might be within a single larger framework, two separate groups bound by obligations of mutual assistance. There might, for example, be a group comprising France, Russia and Czechoslovakia, and another group comprising Germany, Poland and



other States. This would split the general Eastern Pact into a number of groups, contrary to the spirit of the Covenant, and these groups would draw their moral sanction only from the fact of their inclusion within the framework of the Eastern Pact.

The German Government thought the best course would be to conclude a general pact containing obligations of non-aggression and consultation, and an undertaking not to afford assistance to an aggressor. This would be sufficient if the parties had confidence in the signatures to the pact.

Herr Hitler thought it necessary to say that there were no military agreements, open or secret, between Germany and Poland. Neither the German Government nor, he believed, the Polish Government, had any desire for such agreements.

SIR JOHN SIMON said he understood from Baron von Neurath that it was intended to communicate to His Majesty's Government more detailed proposals of the German Government in reference to an Eastern Pact. He understood that Baron von Neurath would state the German proposal in greater detail later in order to save the Chancellor's time.

He had also been informed that the French Government had asked the German Government for their views on the proposed Eastern Pact, but that the German Government had not yet replied. He of course disclaimed any desire to play any more active part in this than was fitting, but he took the liberty to hope that the German Government would reply to the French Government at an early date.

BARON VON NEURATH recalled that the French Government had sent a rejoinder<sup>9</sup> to the first German reply to the proposal for an Eastern Pact.<sup>10</sup> This French communication contained nothing to justify any change in the German attitude. The German Government were ready to reply to the French Government if the latter so wished. The reply would be on the lines just stated by the Chancellor. In no circumstances would the German Government accept provisions of mutual assistance, but they were quite willing to accept the other aspects of the proposal. There was another point which had not been mentioned by the Chancellor, namely, that the German Government was also ready to accept arbitration as already in force between Germany and other countries. As regards the question put by Sir John Simon at the opening of the meeting, he remarked that Germany would, of course, be in the group which did not afford mutual assistance. The proposal would be tantamount to legalising alliances. Agreements of mutual assistance were, in fact, military alliances. If Germany entered the pact in such circumstances, she would be merely giving her sanction to a Franco-Russian alliance. The situation would, in fact, be the same as if there were no pact at all and the same two countries had concluded an alliance.

SIR JOHN SIMON made it clear that he was not recommending any course of action about the French note, but merely asking for information. It was not, of course, for him to say, but he would have thought that the despatch

<sup>9</sup> On January 16, 1935; cf. No. 342, note 1.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. No. 85, note 1.

of a German reply to the French Government would clarify the situation, whatever that reply might be.

HERR HITLER interposed to say that a conversation like the present clarified the situation more than fifty diplomatic notes.

SIR JOHN SIMON observed that there was, however, no French representative present.

### *Austria*

SIR JOHN SIMON then suggested that the subject of Austria might be dealt with and he would ask Mr. Eden to begin.

MR. EDEN said that the German Government were apparently not satisfied with the latest reply received from the French Government.<sup>11</sup> He believed that the German Government favoured the Central European Pact in principle, but that they found difficulties in practice. The only feeling of His Majesty's Government in the matter was that it would be a good thing if these practical difficulties could be surmounted, and the sooner the better.

HERR HITLER said he wished to offer some observations on the general aspects of the Austrian problem. The inhabitants of the two countries had the same national origin, and until 1866 both countries formed a single political unit, although they were under different sovereignties. He had no doubt that if a free vote were possible, the population of Austria would vote for closer relations, if not complete union, with Germany. Germany and Austria had always had certain ideas in common, in literature, poetry, music, arts and sciences, in legal conceptions and historical traditions. They also had common political ideas. Socialism had prevailed in both Germany and Austria, as also had liberalism and communism and now National-Socialism. A further element was that of very close personal relationships. Hundreds of thousands of Austrians had relatives in Germany and *vice versa*. There was a very strong German colony in Austria and over 275,000 Austrians were living in Germany, with relations in Austria. The Chancellor himself was Austrian born, and most of his relations lived in Austria. This was a decisive element for the comprehension of the relations existing between the two countries. The difficulties arising out of the separation of two members of one and the same unit were increased by economic difficulties. A very great many Austrians were convinced that economically Austria could not live alone. He would assert, however, that no one in Germany had any thought of annexing Austria, or of depriving her of her right of self-determination, or of imposing upon Austria any union with Germany. The present difficulties between the two countries had arisen from the fact that in Germany National-Socialism had conquered the nation, while in Austria a similar organisation had been successful, but had then been met by a counter-organisation financed by Italian Fascism. This was an internal Austrian conflict. The present régime had declared itself a sovereign and permanent instrument of government and had suppressed all organs of expression of the people's will.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. No. 550, note 2.

This had driven more than 40,000 Austrians to emigrate to Germany. Another 100,000 addressed themselves to relations in Germany. The Austrian emigrants in Germany were more numerous than the German emigrants in England, France or the Netherlands. The important fact was that a large number of Austrian emigrants in Germany had relations in Austria. This was where the problem of interference arose. He would point out that a large amount of literature was published in Paris, Warsaw, Prague and London severely attacking the German Government, advocating its overthrow, and inciting to disobedience, although 96 per cent. of the German people were in favour of the National-Socialist régime. Attacks were even made upon the legal institutions of Germany, such, for example, as during the Reichstag fire trial held in London.<sup>12</sup> Millions of leaflets and hundreds of thousands of pamphlets were printed abroad, and Governments declared that they were unable to stop this at the very moment when the same Governments reproached the German Government with its inability to put a stop to similar action by Austrian *émigrés* in Germany. If the régime in Austria was supported by the Austrian people, the *émigrés* would have no moral foundation for their activities, just as the German *émigrés* had no moral foundation for theirs.

Not for one minute did Germany think of violating Austrian territory or disregarding the treaty or imposing any régime upon Austria. He would assure the British Ministers, as one who knew Austria, that he had no desire to increase the economic difficulties of his own country by the annexation of a country whose economic difficulties were greater still. He would be glad if Austria could disappear from the chess-board of European politics. Germans would like to leave Austria severely alone, but of course other countries would also have to do the same. He was here of course not referring to England, but to another country which looked on Austria as a field for political influence and as a basis for future hopes. Germany was ready to do her utmost to contribute towards the appeasement of the Austrian situation.

BARON VON NEURATH observed that Germany accepted the idea of a Central European pact in principle, but raised doubts as [?to] its practicability. One difficulty was the definition of non-interference. The reply received by Germany to the question on this point was obscure. The difficulty of finding a definition was illustrated by the following incidents. A fortnight ago he had received a protest from the Austrian Government in regard to a remark made in private conversation by the Chancellor at Saarbrücken to the effect that if there were a vote in Austria the result might be the same as in the Saar. The Austrian Government thought this was interference.

<sup>12</sup> A counter-trial to that to be held in Leipzig was opened in London on September 14, 1933, in the courtroom of the Law Society as a propaganda idea. The final conclusion was that no connection could be traced between the Communist Party and the burning of the Reichstag but that grave suspicions existed relating to the complicity of leading personalities of the National Socialist Party. Cf. Fritz Tobias, *The Reichstag Fire: Legend and Truth*, translated by A. J. Pomerans (London, 1963), pp. 120 ff.

Then, again, Sir John Simon had said in the House of Commons<sup>13</sup> that the Austrian Ministers when in London had understood the lively interest taken by the British public in the Marxist riots in Austria. In view of this difficulty of definition, the German Government thought they could now await further proposals from those who had initiated the proposal for the pact.

SIR JOHN SIMON remarked that he had said nothing about riots.

BARON VON NEURATH tried to repeat what Sir John Simon had said, but had to confess that he could not remember the precise words.

SIR JOHN SIMON suggested that he might look it up.

HERR HITLER said that he would be glad if a good definition of the notion of non-interference could be accepted. He could easily bring into the room several hundred Communist criminals sent into Germany from Russia, who had received training in the handling of explosives and in making bomb attacks. There were 400 or 500 of them in German prisons. This showed how elastic non-interference could be. The country which was sending these people into Germany wanted Germany to enter into a pact of non-interference. When the Communist centre of Berlin was seized, they had found military maps prepared by General Staff officers in preparation for civil war in Germany. These had come from Russia, as well as money. This was a striking example in non-interference.

HERR VON RIBBENTROP remarked that there were also leaflets in English and in Indian languages.

HERR HITLER added that there were special sections of the Comintern for England, India, Poland, Spain and United States of America.

MR. EDEN said that he quite admitted the existence of these terrorist organisations. The problem had recently been raised in an acute form by the murder of King Alexander. A committee had been set up by the Council of the League to see what could be done about it. The problem was not necessarily insoluble. It would be a pity if, on this ground alone, the Central European pact were to be abandoned.

HERR HITLER said he had raised these points merely in order to show how difficult it was to define non-interference.

MR. EDEN recalled that the point at issue was the French reply to the German Government, but he saw no reason why this particular difficulty should hold up the whole scheme.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that His Majesty's Government would be glad if the German Government would favour the idea of a general pact, the object of which would be to exclude external non-interference from Austria; but he recognised the difficulty of definition. Perhaps the German Government would contribute by suggesting a new draft. He did not want to set Baron von Neurath an insoluble problem, but he would be glad if he would try.

<sup>13</sup> A reference to Sir J. Simon's reply to a parliamentary question on March 6 relating to the treatment of Socialists in Austria; cf. No. 550, note 3. Dr. Schuschnigg, Baron Berger-Waldenegg, and Baron Heerdtl of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Austrian Federal Chancellery had visited London, February 24-26.

HERR HITLER remarked that they would leave the initiative to those who had first taken it. The German Government had never threatened the sovereignty of Austria nor had they any intention of attacking Austria. Germany might have mobilised two or three divisions in 1934, and Germany would to-day be in a position to do so if she desired to exercise pressure. Germany had not mobilised and would not do so. She did not seek diplomatic success through military pressure. If it came to the worst German soldiers would do their duty as bravely as those of the country which had thought it necessary to mobilise and to call up young men to the colours. Austrian sovereignty was not threatened by Germany.

HERR VON RIBBENTROP recalled that the Chancellor had said that he had no desire to intervene in Austrian affairs and would welcome a solution of the Austrian problem to the satisfaction of all concerned, so that it might cease to be the object of international quarrels. The British Government had of course given serious consideration to this problem. Could Sir John Simon say what their ideas were?

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he had stated that His Majesty's Government would like to see such a policy pursued as would ensure the integrity and independence of Austria. But His Majesty's Government could not treat Austria in the same way as a country like Belgium which lay at their doors. His Majesty's Government's only desire was to see that part of Europe settle down. In their view interference by one side was as objectionable as interference by the other.

HERR HITLER said that that was an idea which he could perfectly well accept.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that it only needed working out. Was it possible to make any progress in practice at the present moment?

HERR HITLER said he was convinced that the moment they reached a practical solution, the elements now obscuring the situation would be eliminated by the solution which had been found. The draft agreement in its present form had met with objection from others besides the German Government.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he did not like to finish a discussion so long as there was something not clear in his mind. The Chancellor had said that as soon as a practical solution had been reached all difficulties would disappear. His colleagues might ask him what the Chancellor had meant by a 'practical solution.' Was there anything Herr Hitler could say to make clear his idea of such a solution?

HERR HITLER said that the solution he had in mind would be a solution acceptable to all other countries. The scheme at present in contemplation was not acceptable to most of the countries concerned, in fact only to Italy and France, that is to say to countries either indirectly interested or only unilaterally interested. What he had in mind was something satisfactory to all countries concerned. He did not like others to prepare a meal which none of them really liked, but which they called upon Germany to taste first, the result being that they could plead that they could not be expected to taste

it because Germany refused to do so. It would be better for the other parties to draw up something which they all liked, and then the German Government would probably come in.

SIR ERIC PHIPPS pointedly remarked that this was contrary to the common German thesis. The usual German complaint was that other people presented her with a dish already cooked, whereas she claimed the right to take part in the cooking.

HERR HITLER said there was a great difference between the Austrian question and the questions to which Sir Eric Phipps had drawn attention.

The Austrian problem did not interest the German Government or concern them. The other questions in regard to which the German Government had complained of not being consulted from the outset were questions of vital interest to Germany.

Germany did not intend to threaten the independence of Austria. Therefore there was no reason why the German Government should say anything with regard to Austria. The German Government thought that the question of Austria had been artificially created. Therefore they would make no sacrifice, because Germany had no intention of attacking Austria. The question of armaments was entirely different, for in that the German Government were vitally interested.

In the Austrian question the German Government were not interested. They wanted, of course, to be agreeable to other Powers in regard thereto and to make a contribution to the settlement of the question. But they did not think the Austrian question a problem at all. Why should they guarantee non-interference with Austria when such a guarantee was not deemed necessary in the case of other countries? Germany, for example, was bothered by the question of the *émigrés*, but nobody wanted to guarantee her.

The German Government were indifferent to the Austrian question, which did not necessitate sacrifice or concessions by them.

Why could not the question be settled by a non-aggression pact? The German Government feared by the suggestions which were put to them to complicate a troubled situation. They preferred clear-cut solutions, a non-aggression pact, for example.

They did not see the utility of a guarantee of non-interference. They need make no sacrifices in the Austrian question because Germany did not intend to threaten the independence of Austria.

Herr Hitler was not so foolish as to think that he could localise the question of the union of Germany and Austria. Of course, an attempt at union would have wide repercussions. Germany did not see why special safeguards were necessary, for she did not intend to threaten Austrian independence.

### *The League of Nations*

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he did not feel able to say any more on the Austrian question, but there were still three matters for discussion. He would like to hear the German Government's views on the League of Nations. He would like to say something about armaments, and he would like to

communicate his ideas about the Air Pact and to hear Herr Hitler's views on that question.

HERR HITLER suggested that the question of the League of Nations should be taken immediately, and the other questions on the following day.

SIR JOHN SIMON: As regards the League of Nations, Herr Hitler must know how sincerely the British Government was attached to this new conception of a League of Nations. It provided an essential meeting-place where the discussion of difficulties might take place and where it had been possible to reach adjustments about many matters which might otherwise have become dangerous.

Even recently, the value of the League had been made manifest in the question of the policing of the Saar. There, it was true, the British Government had taken the initiative, but the other national contingents could not have been so easily secured or general agreement reached without the useful machinery of the League. Sir John Simon wished to acknowledge the Chancellor's prompt reply about the British proposal for the international force for the Saar.<sup>14</sup>

Another recent instance of the great value of the League was in the matter of the difficulties between Yugoslavia and Hungary.<sup>15</sup>

The British Government knew that the German Government felt that they had criticisms to make on the League of Nations, and he had heard that the German Government thought that the League Covenant should be modified.

In England they were deeply attached to the League, and they did not wish to see it used on behalf of one side or the other. That was one reason why they attached such importance to the German return to the League, for in the present circumstances they had not the same contact with Germany as they had with the Powers at Geneva.

Sir John Simon explained that the British Ministers wished particularly to mention the League on this occasion because the German return to the League was a great pre-occupation to the average British citizen, who wanted to do what was fair and right, and who wanted to facilitate Germany's return to the League.

That feeling was very widespread in Britain, and it was a feeling of regret to very many British people that Germany was not at Geneva. In these circumstances anything Herr Hitler could tell the British Ministers on this matter would be very helpful to them because they wanted to be 'honest brokers,' as Herr Hitler himself had said a little earlier in the meeting.

HERR HITLER said that the League of Nations was the most difficult of the matters they had to discuss, because Germany, in the belief she had in the League of Nations in 1918, had laid down her arms. The League had been one of President Wilson's 14 Points, 'a society of free nations where there should be no victors and no vanquished, and which should unite all the nations to prevent the recurrence of war.'

Although all the nations had suffered from the war, none had suffered like Germany with her 2 million dead in battle and 800,000 who had died from

<sup>14</sup> See Nos. 258 and 260.

<sup>15</sup> See Nos. 202 and 252.

starvation. In Germany opinion had at the end of the war been more favourable than in any other country to the League because German opinion thought that the League would be a way to solve all these problems.

Then came a great disillusionment owing to the coupling of the Covenant with the Treaty of Versailles. German opinion had realised that the League, in which it had placed such high hopes, was the only organ by which the Treaty was to be executed. That Treaty had classified the nations as victors and vanquished, as the superior and the inferior.

Certain German Governments had accepted that classification; but the German people had never accepted it.

In the war the German soldiers had never had any feeling of inferiority; and they who had come in their millions to fight had taken no previous part in public affairs, and therefore could not be made responsible for the war.

He himself had only been 25 in 1914; and he had not been responsible for the war; but he had done his duty to his country.

The German soldiers had had no feeling of inferiority to others. They had had, indeed, admiration for the soldiers of their enemies and, particularly, for the British soldiers. They might have lost the war; but they felt no moral inferiority.

If Herr Hitler had been Chancellor in 1914 there would have been no war, and certainly not a war with England; and if he had been Chancellor the war, had it taken place, would not necessarily have been lost.

The Treaty of Versailles had imposed upon the German nation an inferiority which they had never recognised. The imposition of that inferiority was the greatest mistake in the Treaty. It was not the territorial changes imposed by the Treaty or the reparations; but it was the inferiority which rankled, the division into two classes of nations.

Once the League of Nations had associated itself with that system, it was impossible for any honest and truth-loving German to associate himself with the League. If Britain wanted relations with Germany, she must want them with the good and honest Germans and not with the bad Germans; the good Germans would not have accepted the idea of inferiority. If those good Germans were to agree and shake hands with the British, the latter must take the hands of the good Germans as the Germans would wish to take the hands of the good English.

MR. EDEN wished to emphasise once more what Sir John Simon had said about the British Government's belief in the League. The British Government were convinced that some such organisation was indispensable in the modern world. The only alternative was the alliances, &c., which did not prevent the war of 1914.

Another feature of the League to which importance was attached in Britain was the fact that it could never be effective if it did not include at least all the European nations. That was one reason why the British Government wanted Germany back.

Mr. Eden did not follow Herr Hitler's argument about the victors and the vanquished. It was true that the Covenant was born of the Treaty of Ver-



sailles, but technically one could divorce the two. He wished to emphasise that in the minds of the British Government there could never be any conception but that Germany was the complete equal of the other Powers in the League itself and on the Council.

Germany had entered the League after the Locarno Treaty. One service of that Treaty had been that it had brought to an end the conception of victors and vanquished. Then Germany took her place at the Council as one of its permanent members. There was no inferiority about that, and Germany had certainly been treated with full equality at Geneva.

Mr. Eden was not surprised to hear that the German soldier never admitted to inferiority. He had never had any doubt on that point when he had been opposite the German soldiers in the line. He did not truly believe that amongst the other nations there was that sense of two classes. There were many nations at Geneva who had fought on either side in the war. Of course, if some technical change was wanted, the matter could be explored.

The British Government did want Germany at Geneva, and British opinion did not understand why Germany or any other country that sincerely desired peace could not come back. Certainly no one in England wanted her in a place of inferiority.

SIR JOHN SIMON enquired if the separation of the Covenant from the Treaty of Versailles would help to bring Germany back to Geneva. No doubt there were other points; but there was no use in spending time on formalities if that would not help.

He fully appreciated the point of view that the Covenant would be better as a self-contained document standing by itself. He was sure that the founders of the League did not regard the Covenant as part of the Treaties. They were trying to create a world-wide thing. If the separation of the Covenant from the Treaty would alter Germany's point of view that would be a new reason for seeing if it could be done. If that matter would have a substantial influence, then they must try and cut the two documents adrift so that there should be no question of tying the Covenant to the tail of any Treaty.

HERR HITLER said that as regards the League of Nations he had defined the German position in May 1933. Unfortunately his speech on that occasion<sup>16</sup> was interpreted like the speeches of other German Chancellors, such as Herr Müller,<sup>17</sup> Herr Fehrenbach,<sup>17</sup> &c. If his declaration on that occasion had been interpreted like his present speeches and like his future speeches would be, there would have been no misunderstanding.

On that occasion he had made it clear that Germany would not continue to participate in a disarmament conference and the League of Nations, &c., if she was to remain a country of inferior right. That was still the position. He agreed with Mr. Eden that the problem was partly one of the technical separation of the Covenant and the Treaty. But what remained over and

<sup>16</sup> See Volume V, No. 153.

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Hermann Müller, a Social Democrat, had been Chancellor in 1920 and from 1928 to 1930. Dr. K. Fehrenbach had been Chancellor from June 1920 to May 1921.

beyond that was the actual fact of Germany's position of inferiority on all those points which she had not rectified for herself.

Germany had rectified for herself the questions of conscription and military equality which touched her honour. He did not refer to European territorial questions. He knew that it was difficult to modify the territorial statute of Europe, unless Germany was ready to face the danger of the whole structure tumbling.

He would give one illustration of the German position of inferiority. Suppose that Germany returned to the League and that Japan was still not a member. Then Germany would still not be thought fit to administer a colony, while Japan would administer a former German colony. What a clear illustration of German inferiority!

Perhaps France and Britain did not derive advantage from the former German colonies. Perhaps Germany would not get anything out of them; and many Germans said so before the War; and added that England had conquered the good colonies whilst Germans were quarrelling about religion; and that nothing good had been left for them.

Herr Hitler did not know the economic value of these colonies. Perhaps they had little economic value for the British Empire. Probably they caused financial loss to the British Empire and would cause financial loss to Germany too. But it was the moral and legal aspect of the question, and the whole position which Germany occupied in the world was affected by it.

Herr Hitler then produced a diagram on which the colonial possessions of the various Powers were illustrated, together with the corresponding size of their territories in Europe. Herr Hitler said that this diagram would give the British Ministers a clear idea of what he meant. It was a position of inequality and inferiority under which Germany, with a population of 68 millions and 460,000 square kilometres of territory—with 137 inhabitants to each square kilometre—had no colonies.

This question of Germany's equality could not be solved by some solution which might be regretted on the following day by the Powers who were parties to the settlement. It could only be solved by absolute satisfaction on every side. No temporary solution was possible; the solution must take account of all the aspects of the question to which Herr Hitler had referred.

If a satisfactory solution of this question was found, then Britain would have engaged Germany; and Germany would blindly and loyally fulfil her undertakings.

Herr Hitler was not asking the impossible, because he knew that certain things were impossible now. But he was asking the absolute minimum; and if they looked into the distant future, the British Government might ask themselves whether British interests would be served by allowing Germany to become a pariah when she might have allowed Germany to take part with her.

The moment would come when the European nations must stand together. For the time being they were engaged in preventing their own controversies from exploding. But the moment might come when the European nations

must stand together, in particular, when Germany and Britain must stand together.

In times of peace there had never been hatred against Britain in Germany; and in the National Socialist movement there was no anti-British feeling.

The German Government wanted agreement with Britain and also with France, but in the case of the latter it was very difficult to dissipate certain misunderstandings; and an understanding with Britain would be a valuable asset.

Herr Hitler's proposal was a very bold one, but as Germany knew that she could never defend alone her colonial possessions, so it might be that even the British Empire might one day be glad to have Germany's help and Germany's forces at her disposal. If they could find such a solution and give satisfaction to Germany's most urgent and primitive demands, they would lead Germany back to co-operation and friendly relations with Great Britain.

He had outlined a bold idea, but he had wished to put it forward.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that there had been frank speech on both sides; and he must now make two observations.

First, Herr Hitler had been sketching out a thought in his mind which would seem to involve on the part of Britain some willingness to separate herself from general co-operation in Europe and which might almost seem an invitation to Britain to regard France as less associated with her than Germany. The British Government wished to have the closest association with Germany, but they wanted that without prejudice to their relations with France. They did not wish to substitute one friend for another, because they wanted to be loyal friends to all. He must say that at once. Otherwise he would not be acting faithfully to those who were not present that day.

Britain had no special engagements. She was free and wished to remain free and to give friendship to all. But she was not open to the solicitation that she would not be faithful to her old relationships when seeking to improve relationships elsewhere.

Secondly, as to the question of colonies, he took note of and would report what had been said, but he must point out that as regards mandated territories they were not at the sole disposal of Britain. Other Powers were concerned. It was right to point that out.

Then as regards that large area which had represented British colonial territory on Herr Hitler's diagram, Herr Hitler must remember that that area included not only colonies comparable with the colonial possessions of other Powers, but the great Dominions of Canada, of the Union of South Africa, of the Commonwealth of Australia, and of New Zealand.

There had no doubt been a time when those great Dominions had been dependent on Britain; but that had long since passed, and to-day they were in no sense whatever in a relationship to Britain comparable in any way to the colonies of other Powers. The matter was very important. He did not wish to leave the Chancellor under any misapprehension that he held out any hope whatever that the British Government could do anything about the colonial question. He took note of what had been said and he would report.

But he did not wish to leave the Chancellor under any mistaken impression. It was best to be frank.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

### THIRD MEETING

*March 26, 1935, at 10.30 a.m.*

#### *Naval Armaments*

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he regarded that morning's proceedings as a continuation of those of yesterday, and therefore had no general remarks to make at the moment. He proposed to take up the next subject on the programme, namely, armaments. He wished to make a statement about the naval side of this matter.

The German Government would be aware that representatives of His Majesty's Government had recently been engaged in bilateral conversations with representatives of a number of other Governments in view of the fact that in 1935 the continuation or modification of existing naval treaties comes under consideration. He would like to inform the Chancellor what had been happening. Separate conversations had taken place in London with representatives of the United States of America and Japan, and somewhat less elaborate conversations with representatives of France and Italy. The object in each case was to prepare the ground for the naval discussions of 1935.

The first thing he had to say was that His Majesty's Government hoped that the German Government would take part in any general conference of naval Powers that might be held in the near future. With this in view, it would be useful if informal exchanges of views could now take place on the naval question between representatives of His Majesty's Government and the German Government. London would probably be the best place for these. The conversations with the United States, France and Italy took place in London, and were conducted on their part by Ambassadors helped by technical assistants. His Majesty's Government would like in these discussions to learn from the German representatives the view of the German Government as to the requirements which Germany would wish to be discussed at a naval conference.

It would be understood, of course, that this proposal was made without prejudice to the validity of existing treaty provisions, and was made with all reserve on this point and without prejudice to any agreement regarding armaments generally which might be reached as part of the general settlement foreshadowed in the London communiqué.

There was one other communication he would like to make on this subject. He wished to inform the German Government that the method that His Majesty's Government thought most likely to give results was not to raise or seek to formulate proposals in the form of ratios, but to consider whether it was possible to reach agreement about programmes for the next period of years. During the preliminary discussions in London it had been suggested

that this period might run to 1942. No country was able in a very limited number of years to construct at an unlimited rate, whatever its ultimate programme might be. This applied to Great Britain as well as to other Powers. He therefore hoped that, in the preliminary Anglo-German discussions in London on naval issues preparatory to a general naval conference, this method would be thought practicable by the German Government. At the present stage, however, it was necessary to do no more than make the enquiry as to a preliminary meeting. The method His Majesty's Government hoped would be adopted would not pre-judge or lay down figures for the distant future by the method of ratios.

HERR HITLER asked what would be the date of the Naval Conference. He said that this proposal came as a great surprise, and was completely new. Hitherto naval conferences had tried to fix ratios. The Washington Treaty<sup>18</sup> had laid down ratios up to which the parties were free to build or not as they wished. So far as the new proposal was concerned, he thought it necessary to say that a number of States were fully equipped with fleets sufficient for their needs under previous conferences. Under building programmes, building would be limited, or there might be no building at all. It might, for example, be arranged that there should be no fresh construction for a period of five years. In that event Germany would not be able to build anything for five years, and Germany's sovereign rights, which she could not in any event give up, would merely exist on paper.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that the date for the naval conference had not yet been fixed and was a matter for negotiation.

He wished at once to explain that the Chancellor was mistaken in supposing that he had proposed or indicated a method that was entirely novel. There were two quite distinct points. The first was the proposal that there should be a preliminary meeting between British and German representatives to see whether an exchange of views on naval subjects would be useful in preparation for the naval conference. He would be glad at some convenient time to receive a reply to this proposal. This proposal was, of course, made subject to reserves and without prejudice to the provisions of existing treaties.

The second point was merely a piece of information, and not a proposal. His Majesty's Government were trying to do with Germany what they had already done with the other naval Powers. He wished therefore to inform the German Government that the method that His Majesty's Government had found most useful to consider was whether it would be possible to propound programmes. It was better that he should tell the Chancellor this than that he should not tell him. There was no occasion for surprise. The Chancellor may not have understood that the method did not mean that each State should have the same programme. What was intended was that States should discuss what their respective programmes should be. It was not suggested

<sup>18</sup> The Treaty between the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan for the Limitation of Naval Armament, signed at Washington on February 6, 1922; see No. 1 in Cmd. 1627 of 1922.

that  $X$  should be the same for all. Each country would discuss with every other whether their requirements over a period of years could be stated in programmes rather than in ratios. This, surely, was not a very revolutionary proposal.

BARON VON NEURATH said there might have been a misunderstanding.

HERR HITLER said that the first proposal was accepted.

He added that even the proposed building programme[s] would have some relation to each other, and that in the end the effect would be similar to that of ratios. It was obvious that, if Russia reconstructed her fleet, this must have repercussions on the German programme. In the same way, if France built giant ships of high speed, this must have its effect upon the German programme. There was bound to be interaction. It would probably not be possible to discover the best method until the conference met.

On a point of principle, he wished to say that Germany did not want to pursue an unlimited naval armaments race as had been the case before the War. Germany did not think it politically necessary, and had not the necessary financial resources for such a race. On the other hand, Germany must take account of certain vital necessities in the matter of her own protection, and could not make those necessities dependent upon a conference the date of which had not been fixed and the results of which were not certain. While he was prepared to give every assurance to His Majesty's Government that there would be no naval armaments race between Germany and Great Britain, Germany could not subordinate the requirements of her own security to a conference the date and result of which were unknown. If Russia and France increased their fleets, Germany must be in a position to do what she thought necessary to safeguard her own security. No responsible Government could do otherwise.

He wished also to make the reservation that, at least from the theoretical point of view, a possible new agreement reached at the conference would not necessarily replace the Treaty of Versailles.

SIR JOHN SIMON said, as regards this last observation, that the results of the naval conference were of course a matter for the future, but His Majesty's Government earnestly desired that an agreement should be reached which would take the place of existing provisions. All that he was concerned to make plain was that, in inviting the German Government to send representatives to London for a preliminary discussion on naval matters in preparation for the naval conference, it was clearly understood that this invitation was not an abandonment of existing treaty provisions, but was given and accepted with all reserve on this point, because it was for the future negotiation to reach a new agreement.

Sir John Simon continued that Herr Hitler had been good enough to say that Germany was not contemplating an unlimited armaments race in the naval sphere. The British Ministers were, of course, very glad to hear that. He thought, since they were speaking with such complete frankness and in order to inform one another, that he ought to point out that a figure which he believed had been mentioned to the British Ambassador of 35 per cent.

of the British fleet<sup>19</sup> would appear to the British Government—apart from any other question—to be so large as to make general agreement almost impossible. The result would therefore be, if that figure were insisted upon, to promote the unlimited armaments race which the Chancellor said the German Government wished to avoid.

Such a figure would inevitably increase the demands of France, for the French figure was, roughly speaking, 50 per cent. of the British figure. If it really was contemplated that the German Government intended to build up to so large a figure as that indicated, that meant new tonnage, and therefore the most efficient ships. It was quite obvious that this must result in putting up the size of the French and therefore also of the Italian navy. This would have serious results on the British figures.

The consequence would be that the unlimited armaments race which Germany wished to co-operate in avoiding would, in fact, be stimulated and hastened.

Sir John Simon made this observation because he did not want the German Government to be under any misapprehension as to the view which the British Government would take on any such figure. But he understood that the Chancellor agreed that the preliminary meeting should take place in London, and that the best way in which the needs and intentions of the different Powers could be formulated would be a matter for consideration at that meeting.

He only made the statement which he had just made because he thought it would be of no advantage to any one if there was any misunderstanding as to the grave impression which would be made on the British Government by the mention of the figure in question.

HERR HITLER said that there had been a mistake. The present ratio of the French fleet, he understood, was 35 per cent. of the British fleet, though under the Washington Agreement it had been 50 per cent.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that the French fleet was at present in tonnage 50 per cent. of the British fleet or rather over. The Washington Treaty was not the only treaty which had to be considered. The Washington and London treaties<sup>20</sup> must be taken together. In fact, if these two treaties were taken together, it would be found that French tonnage was 667,000, as against 1,200,000 tons of the British fleet.

Those were the present figures.

BARON VON NEURATH then went out of the room to check these figures. He returned after a few minutes and admitted that the British figures were right.

HERR HITLER said that his claim to 35 per cent. of the British fleet implied unequivocal recognition of British naval superiority. He emphasised that he did not make this claim for a limited period of 2, 5 or 6 years. Any assurance which he gave with regard to it would be for ever.

<sup>19</sup> See No. 571.

<sup>20</sup> i.e. the London Naval Treaty of April 22, 1930; see Volume I, Appendix I, and *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 132, pp. 603 ff.

On the other hand he did not see any heavenly or earthly authority who could force Germany to recognise the superiority of the French or Italian fleets.

Germany's requirements for the protection of her trade were just as great as those of France or Italy for the protection of their trade.

In those circumstances it was hard for him to see how a figure of 35 per cent. of the British fleet claimed by Germany could give any right to France to increase her percentage demand.

He claimed 35 per cent. of the British fleet for Germany, but not 35 per cent. for all the different categories of ships.

He based his claim on the need for the protection of the long coastline in the Baltic in particular, and further on the protection of German communications with East Prussia, which, for Germany, had almost become an overseas colony.

As regards the objection that the 35 per cent. would be new tonnage, Herr Hitler said that he could not possibly build up the 35 per cent. within three or five years. It would take much longer than that, and that would give other countries an opportunity to modernise their fleets.

Further, his 35 per cent. would be burdened with the ships built under the Versailles conditions. The cruisers so built were too slow and inadequately armed.

SIR JOHN SIMON took note of the agreement in principle for a meeting in London under the conditions indicated.

HERR HITLER wished at this point to make an observation of principle. The meetings of the 25th March and of that morning were the first which he had had in this highly official manner with the representatives of the British Government.

He thought that they were not in that room concerned with the problems of to-morrow or of the day after.

But it was necessary to define the German conceptions and wishes as clearly as possible, so that on the basis of those clear definitions co-operation over a long period might be possible with all countries.

He would therefore think it wrong to advance demands now in order to increase them after two or three years; and he would think it just as wrong to remain silent on demands which Germany would put forward after two or three years.

For that reason he had very frankly and fully explained the conceptions held by the German Government as to the conditions to which Germany's return to the League of Nations must be subordinated and as to the possibilities of concluding a naval agreement.

He had put forward Germany's demands in respect of that naval agreement frankly; he was guided not by the circumstances of the moment, but was taking account of a more distant future.

It would be an impossible situation if Germany returned to the League to put forward new demands so far unknown to the world after two or three years. That might imply, if those demands were rejected, a fresh German withdrawal from Geneva.



Thus there would be continuous disturbances and uneasiness.

It was because he had put forward certain demands at that moment that he had thought it best to indicate those demands frankly. He well understood that their fulfilment could for the moment only be a fulfilment of principle; and that their practical realisation, *e.g.*, as regards the navy, would have to take place in the course of time.

### *Kovno Verdict*<sup>21</sup>

At this point HERR HITLER read out a telegram which he had just received announcing the Kovno verdict. He said that that was an illustration of what he had said on the preceding day, and showed the kind of co-operation existing in Eastern Europe. He asked what Britain would do if the Treaty of Versailles had torn away a part of her territory and placed it under a country like Lithuania, and if Englishmen merely because they were Englishmen were tortured and put in prison.

### *Military Armaments*

MR. EDEN said that the German Government must be aware that throughout the long negotiations on the armaments question the British Government had worked for agreement by every means they could find. In the post-war years they had reduced British armaments and tried to find a basis of international agreement.

Mr. Eden wished first to ask if the German Government still wanted an arms limitation agreement.

He would not conceal from the German Government that the recent announcement about the German Army<sup>22</sup> had created a new set of difficulties in the way of agreement. It might even be said that upon the basis revealed by that announcement (*viz.*, the 36 divisions) agreement seemed impossible. In all previous discussions parity between the Western European Powers had been accepted as the basis.

If these 36 divisions implied, as had been suggested to His Majesty's Ambassador, 500,000 men, that seemed a figure to which the other Western European Powers could never attain. It would make parity impossible and give Germany superiority.

It was clear that the British Government could not accept this figure as a basis of discussion. Subject to that reserve he wished to ask certain questions:—

- (1) Was it correct that the proposed German strength in effectives was 500,000 men.
- (2) What was to be the length of service and the rôle of the para-military formations and the police troops.

<sup>21</sup> A treason trial before a military court had opened on December 14, 1934, of a number of Memellanders accused of taking part in a Nazi conspiracy. For the verdict see *The Times*, March 27, p. 14; see also *Survey of International Affairs 1935*, vol. i, pp. 252–6.

<sup>22</sup> See No. 570.

- (3) Would Labour Service be maintained.
- (4) What training would reservists receive in the future.

Those were some of the questions on which the British Ministers would like information to enable them to assess the position.

HERR HITLER then produced a diagram which showed the strengths in divisions of Germany and the neighbouring Powers as follows:—

Germany: 36 divisions.

France: 34 divisions, plus 10 divisions in North Africa.

Italy: 34 divisions.

Czechoslovakia: 17 divisions.

Belgium: 8 divisions.

Poland: 34 divisions.

Russia: 101 divisions.

Herr Hitler then said that people were accustomed to compare with the 36 German divisions a French strength of 25 divisions. But the difference with the French strength as set out in the diagram was explained by the methods of counting adopted by France.

France only counted infantry divisions, while Germany counted all formations (infantry, police troops, cavalry, motorized troops and formations of short-term trained soldiers, the Landwehr).

If that method was applied to the French strength, it would be found that France had 34 divisions to which must be added the 10 divisions in North Africa. It was comparatively easy for the French to bring over their North African troops to Europe; and Germany had no means of severing the communications between France and North Africa.

Therefore, France, in fact, had 44 divisions, as against the 36 German divisions. Further, out of the 36 German divisions, 4 were in East Prussia.

Again, there was in the German Agreement with Poland a specific clause stating that nothing in that agreement should in any way alter the arrangements existing between Poland and France. In the case, therefore, of a Franco-German war, 34 Polish divisions must be added to the French strength; and even if Poland was neutral there were 17 Czech divisions available. Then Italy had 34 divisions, too; and she (apart from the Swiss frontier) had a very short frontier to defend. Germany had a frontier of 3,600 kilometres.

On the other hand, against the 36 German divisions were 101 Russian divisions.

Now, in the Locarno Agreement, Germany had undertaken to respect the demilitarised zone; but in that zone there were no protective fortifications; and yet France had in that region a large network of fortifications. Moreover, the most easterly German fortifications on the East were very near Berlin.

### *Air Armaments*

Herr Hitler then produced a further diagram showing the strength of the Air Forces of the most important of Germany's neighbours.

This diagram showed the following air strengths:—

*Britain—*

August 1934, first line, 1,045 machines; including reserves, 1,847 machines.

April 1935, including reserves, 2,100 machines.

*France—*

August 1934, first line, 1,986 machines; including reserves, 3,800 machines.

April 1935, including reserves, 6,000 machines.

*Italy—*

August 1934, first line, 1,059 machines; including reserves, 1,600 machines.

April 1935, including reserves, 2,100 machines.

*Czechoslovakia—*

August 1934, first line, 570 machines; including reserves, 960 machines.

April 1935, including reserves, 1,200 machines.

*Russia—*

August 1934, first line, 1,979 machines; including reserves, 2,918 machines.

April 1935, including reserves, 4,300 machines.

*Poland—*

August 1934, first line, 695 machines; including reserves, 1,430 machines.

April 1935, including reserves, 1,500 machines.

*Belgium—*

August 1934, first line, 246 machines; including reserves, 400 machines.

April 1935, including reserves, 450 machines.

SIR JOHN SIMON said he did not recognise the figure attributed by the diagram to Britain. He thought we had 690 first line machines.

*Military Armaments [continued]*

Sir John Simon then asked what effectives the 36 divisions represented.

HERR HITLER replied that the figure of 550,000 men would never be exceeded; and that that figure had not yet been reached.

MR. EDEN asked if it was suggested that the French now had 500,000 men in France.

HERR HITLER replied that with their North African troops they had 500,000 men. Herr Hitler said that he was chiefly speaking of France, Germany and Italy; but France had Russia and possibly Poland to help her. If Russia attacked Germany the latter had only Poland.

Germany, moreover, had only begun to train her population within the last two years. In these circumstances the 101 Russian divisions could not be disregarded or the 17 Czech divisions.

Finally, there was the fact that all the German frontiers were entirely unprotected.

Herr Hitler then pointed out that France was now saying that she had comparatively weak classes, for she was entering the lean years. Therefore she had established two years' service. But Germany also had lean years and only one year's service. If the German Government said that 550,000 men corresponded to 36 divisions, it was not absolutely necessary to have all these men with the colours. If Franco-German relations improved and real co-operation between the two countries became possible, then there might be some cuts. But the German Government's intention was to fix a figure which would not be exceeded even if the French introduced three years' or five years' or even seven years' service.

MR. EDEN then asked if he was correct in assuming that the German period of service was one year.

HERR HITLER replied in the affirmative; but the technical troops would have more. He added that the police troops would now definitely pass to the army.

MR. EDEN enquired about para military formations.

HERR HITLER replied that there were no para military formations in Germany. He added that in foreign countries para military organisations received training with rifles even at Eton.

HERR RIBBENTROP said that it was a wrong conception; and that there were no para military organisations in Germany.

SIR JOHN SIMON enquired if the S.S. were included in the 550,000 men.

BARON VON NEURATH replied in the affirmative and said that there was one division of S.S.

SIR ERIC PHIPPS asked if the labour service counted; and the CHANCELLOR replied that they did not count at all.

HERR HITLER said that out of the total S.S. only 10,000 men were armed; one-third of these was in Bavaria, one-third in Berlin, and one-third in the rest of Germany.

MR. EDEN asked about war material.

BARON VON NEURATH said that the German Government had destroyed it all under the Control Commission, but war material took so long to make that they were obliged to work night and day in Germany to replace what had been destroyed.

HERR HITLER said that the German Government required the necessary material for 36 divisions, plus reserves.

MR. EDEN asked about big guns; and the CHANCELLOR said that Germany wanted all the arms possessed by other countries.

BARON VON NEURATH said that if other countries would abandon types of arms, Germany would do the same.

MR. EDEN asked if the German Government would agree not to construct certain types of material above a certain limit if other Powers did the same.

BARON VON NEURATH replied in the negative, because other countries had stocks.

MR. EDEN asked again if Germany would not construct above a certain limit if the other countries agreed.

THE CHANCELLOR repeated that the other countries had stocks already. He then said that, in principle, Germany would participate in any agreement for international limitation. If there was an agreement that on the 1st January, 1938, no nation should possess guns at 15 cm., Germany would not have such guns from that date. Such an agreement would, of course, not prevent Germany from possessing such guns up to that date and, if necessary and other Powers agreed, destroying them afterwards.

If other Powers had certain material Germany could not be defenceless.

Herr Hitler added that he did not believe that any nation would destroy a gun as long as it thought that gun represented an advantage over others. It would only destroy a gun when it knew that it constituted no advantage.

SIR JOHN SIMON enquired whether, if an agreement were reached covering arms limitation, Germany would still be prepared to accept and work a system of permanent automatic supervision, in order to ascertain that the agreement was being duly observed and upon the understanding that such supervision applied to all Powers equally.

HERR HITLER said that the German Government would certainly accept that.

He added that he would like to ask Sir John Simon a question. What were the British Government's views regarding the proportionate strength between Germany and Russia, in view particularly of the approaching Franco-Russian alliance which the German Government believed already existed in the form of a military agreement?

Britain declared she required the strongest Fleet. He thought that was just and fair, because of her position. But what was the British view on the German proportion to Russia and France?

MR. EDEN replied that the table in the British Draft Convention (the so-called MacDonald Plan)<sup>23</sup> gave Germany, France and Italy equality at 200,000 effectives and gave Russia 500,000. He remembered that it was generally agreed at Geneva that a soldier of Eastern Europe did not count as high as one from Western Europe.

HERR HITLER enquired what was the relative value of a Russian tank as compared with the German tank. He claimed that a Russian bomber would fight just as well as a German bomber.

Herr Hitler then produced a chart showing the distribution of industry throughout Germany. The iron and steel industries were located in an unfortified region, the demilitarised zone; so were a large part of the coal-mines.

MR. EDEN said that nobody wanted to touch Germany, especially in the west; and there was Locarno.

HERR HITLER replied that Germany had no protection all the same; and that it was a very short way by air from the frontier to the industrial districts of the centre.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. No. 48, note 4.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that the Chancellor had shown on his diagram that Germany was to have 36 divisions; but there was nothing in that diagram about the strength of the German Air Force.

HERR HITLER said that he had left open two matters: the question of the strength of the fleet and that of parity in the air between Great Britain, France and Germany if Russian development was not such that revision of the figures by common agreement would become necessary.

Herr Hitler said that Russia based her 100 [*sic*] divisions exclusively on the number[?]s of her population, because she was not exposed to attack; and she was building, too, the greatest air fleet in the world. Germany was very modest in not basing her army on the numbers of the population and in asking only for parity with Britain and France.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that in the United Kingdom there was an Air Force which was a metropolitan force. The first line strength of that force was 690 machines. But, on the other side of the world, the British Government had certain other first line machines.

Sir John Simon enquired whether, when the Chancellor referred to parity, he meant parity with the Air Force in the United Kingdom or overseas also.

HERR HITLER said that if Britain would bring her air strength for the United Kingdom up to the French strength, *i.e.*, to parity with France, then it would be that parity which Germany would demand.

If Britain persuaded France to come down to the British level, the German Government would be delighted, because they would have to spend less on their Air Force. But even if Britain did not consider herself threatened by France and preferred to have a smaller force than France, Germany could not help it because of the necessity of protecting herself.

HERR VON RIBBENTROP said that Germany did not care how many aeroplanes there were in England.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that the Chancellor had explained that he was claiming parity with the metropolitan Air Force so far as the United Kingdom was concerned, but what did he mean when he talked of Britain coming up to the French figure? Was he referring to the air strength in Metropolitan France or to the larger figure which included the air strength in the French colonies and even in places like Indo-China on the other side of the world?

HERR HITLER replied that the distance from East Prussia to the Rhineland was the same as the distance from North Africa to France. The parity which he demanded was parity with the Force in Metropolitan France plus that in North Africa.

Herr Hitler added that there could be no question of German hegemony over Europe. What was in question was the hegemony of Russia or the hegemony of a combination of smaller States with France.

SIR JOHN SIMON said there was one more question he must ask. When he had asked Herr Hitler what air force he claimed, the Chancellor had said parity with Britain and France. Now it would be very material to the dis-

cussion if Herr Hitler was able to state the strength of the German Air Force as it was. He felt obliged to put the question.

HERR HITLER replied that Germany had reached parity with Great Britain.

Herr Hitler said that if Russia continued to build on the present scale she would be the greatest Power in Europe. He saw the Russian danger, though he felt himself to be a solitary prophet in the desert. But, later, people would find out that he had been right.

#### *Eastern Pact*

BARON VON NEURATH then handed to the British Ministers the note on the Eastern Pact contained in Annex I.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

### ANNEX I TO THIRD MEETING

#### *Eastern Pact*<sup>24</sup>

In the opinion of the German Government the Powers interested in East European questions might, following up the fundamental ideas of the Kellogg Pact, conclude a pact on the following basis:—

1. The contracting Powers agree not to resort to aggression or to force in any form against one another.
2. The contracting Powers agree to conclude among themselves, as far as they have not yet done so, treaties of arbitration and conciliation providing for an obligatory procedure of arbitration in the case of disputes of a legal nature, and for a procedure of conciliation with a view to arriving at an amicable settlement in matters of political conflicts.
3. If, nevertheless, one of the contracting Powers believes itself to be threatened with aggression or with the employment of force on the part of another contracting Power, then, on the demand of the Power in question, a conference of representatives of the Governments of all contracting Powers will immediately be convened, in order to deliberate on the situation and, if necessary, on the steps to be taken for the maintenance of peace.
4. If, in spite of the above agreement, hostilities should break out between any two contracting Powers, the other contracting Powers engage not to support the aggressor in any way, neither economically nor financially nor in the military way.
5. The pact is to be concluded for a period of ten years, with the possibility of extension for a further period.

### FOURTH MEETING

*March 26, 1935, at 4 p.m.*

#### *Naval Armaments*

SIR JOHN SIMON said, with reference to the proposed naval conversation, 'it is, I think, clearly understood between us that the invitation is given in

<sup>24</sup> This Note, handed to Sir J. Simon by Baron von Neurath on March 26, is printed as No. 9 in Cmd. 5143 of 1936.

order to prepare for the Naval Conference, which will aim at a new naval agreement in the future. Accordingly, if I have hereafter to make a statement in England about the basis of our meeting, I will employ the terms I have just used and in the meantime I understand it is agreed that neither side will make any statement about the Naval Conference and that what I have said will hereafter define the basis of our meeting.'

BARON VON NEURATH agreed.

### *Air Pact*

SIR JOHN SIMON said that the one subject which now remained was the air pact.

In the thought of His Majesty's Government the air pact which they had joined in proposing would be strictly in line with the scope and obligations of the Locarno Treaty. It would involve obligations and action by a signatory in the cases to which Locarno applies. But though it would not therefore apply to a new class of case, it would involve greater precision in two respects.

In the first place, in the event of unprovoked aggression by air attack, it would oblige the signatories to come immediately to the aid of the attacked party. There would not be a discussion at Geneva first.

In the second place, the method by which the signatories would undertake to perform their obligations immediately would be by use of their air forces.

These were the two elements which would be characteristic of the air pact. They would not be new in the sense that a country would be under an obligation to act in a case which did not come under the obligations of Locarno. But they would make more precise and more immediate the cases to which Locarno applied.

The second point about the air pact would be this. His Majesty's Government were glad to take part in putting forward the idea, because it seemed to them that recent developments of the possibility of sudden and violent attack by air over the borders of a country had become much more prominent since Locarno was signed, and the slower methods which would be appropriate if there was to be the mobilisation of an army would be quite inappropriate in the event of sudden and almost instantaneous use of air power. The object, therefore, would not be so much to secure that if one of the signatories disregarded its obligations that signatory would suffer by reprisal, as to create so strong a deterrent and so strong a reason to know beforehand that a sudden assault would not be to the advantage of the aggressor, that there would be every inducement for the signatories to refrain from disregarding their obligations.

There was also a third point. His Majesty's Government would greatly regret if the conclusion of an air pact could possibly have the consequences of appearing to recognise as legitimate indiscriminate attacks from the air upon the civil population and industrial areas. His Majesty's Government would therefore like it to be carefully considered by those who were studying the idea of an air pact whether it would not be possible to introduce, perhaps only by way of preamble or by some general expression, a repudiation by all



signatories of indiscriminate attacks from the air as being contrary to the rules which should be observed by all. It would probably need a good deal of thought to find the proper expression for this idea.

Finally, His Majesty's Government conceived the air pact as not being the document which should contain the figures for air strengths. The air pact itself would merely pledge the signatories to use air forces for the purposes and in the manner described. It followed that air strengths must be agreed in some other documents. His Majesty's Government thought of the air pact, therefore, not as being an agreement that could be reached quite apart from other agreements, but as forming a portion of that more general agreement which was the object of the Anglo-French communiqué, and which formed the scope of the conversations in Berlin.

Sir John Simon feared that the discussions so far, friendly and frank as they had been, were by no means encouraging to the prospects of general agreement. However that might be, His Majesty's Government's idea was that the air pact would not stand by itself, but form part of the complex of agreements with which His Majesty's Government most firmly believed the ultimate peaceful future of Europe to be bound up.

BARON VON NEURATH having interpolated during the translation that he understood that Italy was not included, SIR JOHN SIMON explained the situation as follows. If one took the five Locarno Powers and made an agreement between them, it would, unless qualified, involve, *inter alia*, Britain assisting Germany against Italy and Italy Britain against France.

So he thought that a protocol might be added to say that there would be no obligation upon any signatory to assist another signatory unless the former signatory was already under obligation to do so.

HERR HITLER and BARON VON NEURATH agreed.

HERR HITLER said that the idea and proposal of the Air Pact had two aspects.

The first aspect was very clear and practical and could be realised comparatively easily. The German Government gave their wholehearted support to that aspect of the Pact. That was the Air Pact properly speaking. The German Government also particularly liked the idea of the prohibition of indiscriminate bombing of densely populated regions. The German Government thought such indiscriminate bombing was in itself in absolute contradiction with the Geneva Red Cross Convention, because women and children would be bombed even if the attack was not accompanied by a gas attack.

The German Government were entirely in favour of the Air Pact proper and ready to join it at any moment. For that reason they regretted that the British Government thought it necessary to subordinate the Air Pact to the realisation of an international settlement about air strengths.

The German Government thought it particularly regrettable that the order of priority contemplated by the British Government was first an international agreement on the limitation of air forces and only after that the conclusion of an Air Pact.

This order of priority was regrettable because the Air Pact itself was such a clear and practical proposal.

Herr Hitler thought that the second aspect of the proposal, the limitation of air forces, raised many difficult and complicated problems which it would take long to settle.

Further, it was regrettable that while the Air Pact was to be concluded by a limited number of nations, it was to be subordinated to general conditions which were quite outside the disposal of the signatories of the Air Pact.

Herr Hitler gave the following example:—

In order to have an Air Pact, it would be necessary to reach agreement on the limitation of the air forces not only of the Locarno Powers but also respecting the air strengths of other countries quite outside. Now if Russia's air strength were to be four times as great as at the moment, Germany would have to draw consequences from that. Russia, moreover, was dependent on the Japanese air strength and, therefore, the British proposal really meant that a problem which applied to a limited territory and which was clear in itself would be subordinated to imponderables throughout the world.

Therefore the Chancellor regretted the order of priority in which the two proposals were made.

He added that Germany might be very glad if an international settlement on air strengths could be reached because even under the parity proposals she would not be the strongest Power. He would be glad if such an agreement could include Powers outside the parity group, though he did not know if that was really possible.

It was clear, he thought, that the rapid conclusion of the Air Pact would ease and clarify the situation and he disliked the proposal to burden it with difficult and complicated conditions. He thought it a pity that one of the wisest proposals which had ever been made should be thus endangered.

In expressing these regrets he did not mean to imply that the German Government refused to contemplate any agreement on the limitation of air strengths.

In his view there ought to be first an Air Pact and then parity among the signatories to the Pact. If the Pact came first it would greatly improve the atmosphere for the parity agreement, for its existence would deprive air forces of much of their value. The signatories of the Air Pact would be very content if air armaments could be limited and financial burdens alleviated.

He thought they should contemplate first the Air Pact and then, the Air Pact having deprived the air forces of some of their value, the countries would be less opposed to reduction of air strengths.

If parity could be realised among the signatories of the Air Pact, those countries might form the pacifying bloc from which a fresh effort to limit air strengths might be made.

SIR JOHN SIMON thanked the Chancellor for his clear explanation on this very important point. What the Chancellor had said would be carefully studied and considered. He did not think it quite correct to speak of an order

of priority for the idea contained in the London communiqué was simultaneous negotiation. If there were some prospect of making progress on the other subjects mentioned in the London communiqué it certainly would not be necessary to postpone the Air Pact negotiations until everything else had been settled.

The idea underlying the London communiqué was that a number of matters should be pursued by discussion between the Governments. He agreed that the Air Pact was a simpler and limited conception because it only applied to five Powers and the subject matter was simpler.

There was one other observation he must make. He was very glad to hear the Chancellor say that this opportunity should be used to promote together and with other States the vitally important object of the prohibition of bombing.

He had seen statements that the German Government and the Chancellor himself favoured efforts to prohibit bombing. He would remind the German Ministers that the British proposal of March 1933<sup>25</sup> contained provisions directed to that object. It provided that the Permanent Disarmament Commission should take up without delay the preparation of an agreement which would prohibit military and naval aircraft; but at the same time it pointed out that that would never be possible unless there was adequate control of civil aircraft.

A similar reflection occurred to him about bombing. Undoubtedly civil and commercial machines as now constructed had a power of lift and range and very considerable speed; and in the nature of things were constructed to carry bombs as well as passengers.

What was the German Government's view on this point?

In England people were deeply concerned at the danger which all nations might be preparing for one another while the useful and peaceful service of the air was developed.

He would like to know if the Chancellor when mentioning the restriction of bombing had considered how it could be secured that machines destined for civilian purposes could defeat the prohibition against bombing.

HERR HITLER said that he would first make an observation of principle. The reason why so many attempts to reach agreement had failed was because negotiators followed the practice of film companies which he understood was called 'block booking.' Film companies tried to sell good and bad films together. So also in international affairs the attempt was made to deal with easy and difficult questions together. People seemed bent on getting all or nothing. The Chancellor preferred another method, namely, that which, while bearing all questions in mind for ultimate settlement, tried for the moment only to achieve what was possible. This was the method which he thought ought to be followed.

As regards air bombing, this, he said, was not a military question of technical possibilities, but a question of reaching international agreement by which signatories would undertake not to use these technical possibilities for

<sup>25</sup> i.e. the British Draft Convention; cf. No. 48, note 4.

military purposes. It was doubtful whether, unless civil aviation was abolished altogether, civil aircraft could be deprived of all possibility of use for military purposes. There would always be the technical possibility of using civil aircraft for military ends. But what it was possible to do was to give an undertaking not to make use of these military possibilities.

In the same way it was, of course, technically possible to kill a wounded soldier or a prisoner or a medical officer; but nations had by international agreement undertaken not to do so, and had stigmatised these things as contrary to the rules of humanity. In the same way, in spite of the technical possibility of using civil aircraft for military purposes, it would be possible to come to an international agreement not to do so. This might be achieved by some amendment of the Red Cross Convention.

In this matter also they ought to aim at such agreement as was immediately realisable. What might be achieved at once were: (1) the prohibition of the use of gas and incendiary bombs; (2) the limitation of bombing to the fighting zones; (3) possibly the complete prohibition of all bombardment from the air. This had nothing to do with technical possibilities, but could be the subject of international agreements which would embody the will of the signatories.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he would report what the Chancellor had said to his colleagues. He would also consult with other Governments and perhaps, if the Chancellor allowed, communicate further with the German Government.

### *Conclusion*

SIR JOHN SIMON recalled that the conversations had opened with a mutual promise to speak with frankness. This they had carried out. He thanked the Chancellor for the opportunity he had had of meeting him personally and for the way in which the British Ministers had been welcomed.

But, observing the rule of frankness to the end, he must say that the British Ministers did feel somewhat disappointed that it had not been possible in these two days to get a larger measure of agreement. They regretted that such difficulties were thought to exist on the German side in connexion with some of the matters discussed. He did not in the least regret having come to Berlin. He was sure that this meeting was the best way of continuing this investigation into the various points of view. What he regretted was that they had not been able to do more in the direction of promoting the general agreement which he was sure both sides wanted.

It showed that these things were more difficult and complicated than many well-wishers believed them to be from a distance. At the same time, he felt that they had gained very much by learning so frankly the point of view of the German Government; and he hoped that the German Government felt that it had been valuable to learn from the British Ministers the points on which they felt that difficulties in the way of agreement still lay.

Mr. Eden and he would report to the British Government, who would continue to use their utmost efforts in the spirit of friendly co-operation.

The British Ministers were sincerely thankful for the way in which they had been received in Berlin, and would take away very pleasant memories of the kindness and hospitality shown them.

HERR HITLER wished to assure the British Ministers how happy he had been to talk frankly with them. The gratitude of the German Government for the visit was shared by the German nation. The German Government were very much gratified by this opportunity of free and frank discussion.

Herr Hitler was also grateful to the British Government for the loyal efforts they had made in the matter of the Saar vote, and for all the other matters on which they had adopted such a loyal and generous attitude to Germany. Herr Hitler thanked Sir John Simon in particular for the loyal attitude of an officer of the Saar police, which had prevented a very dangerous situation; he referred to Major Hennessy.<sup>26</sup>

Herr Hitler had tried to give the British Ministers a sincere and frank picture of what the German Government wanted and what were their views.

He asked them to gather from that picture not that Germany was not ready to co-operate in bringing about European solidarity, but that Germany hoped to co-operate.

But he hoped the British Ministers would have seen the difficulty of the German Government's position; they were struggling to lift up a country which had lived during 16 years under moral depression. They were trying to lift her to that level of equality where the other nations were.

In taking over the past from previous German Governments Herr Hitler had decided to liquidate it honestly and sincerely. If he came into international agreements he would bring into them another Germany to that of the past 16 years; otherwise the value of those agreements would be diminished.

The German Government had in mind as an ultimate end not the establishment of a hegemony, which must always be a theory, but the establishment of a community of nations in which Germany would co-operate as an equal member.

If some claims put forward by Germany seemed excessive, the British Ministers must not forget that they had been discussing not a settlement for 1935, but the solution of problems which would take long to settle and could only be settled in a distant future.

Without a fundamental revision of Germany's present position they could not find a solution of pending problems.

Herr Hitler said that in his political life he was not a man who went in and out. At a certain moment he had regretted leaving the League. It was the ardent desire of the German people and Government to be able to return to the League on conditions, however, which would render impossible the recurrence of a situation in which in order to re-establish Germany's equality of status they might be forced to withdraw again.

The British Ministers should be convinced that many of the German objections arose out of the feeling that if the present German Reich gave an

<sup>26</sup> Cf. No. 550.

undertaking, and freely gave it, it would be necessary for the Reich more strictly to observe such an undertaking than any other State in order to restore the reputation which had been lost in the last 16 years.

Herr Hitler would not sign anything which he thought he could not accept: but if he gave an undertaking he would never break it.

The communiqué was then drafted and appears as Annex I<sup>27</sup> to these notes.

(The meeting was then concluded.)

<sup>27</sup> Not printed. Cf. *The Times*, March 27, p. 14.

## No. 652

*Sir H. Chilton<sup>1</sup> (Buenos Aires) to Sir J. Simon*  
*(Received March 27, 3.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 54 Telegraphic [C 2570/55/18]*

*Confidential*

BUENOS AIRES, March 27, 1935, 10.28 a.m.

In the course of conversation on European situation last night Minister for Foreign Affairs said he regarded views of His Majesty's Government respecting Germany's recent actions as much more reasonable and less violent than those of French and that if he could confirm that they were as reported in press and questions were discussed by League of Nations he would instruct Argentine representative to support British point of view.

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Ambassador at Buenos Aires.

## CHAPTER V

# Mr. Eden's visits to Moscow, Warsaw, and Prague: Stresa Conference March 27–April 18, 1935

No. 653

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 29)*

*No. 5 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2609/55/18]*

WARSAW, March 27, 1935

Being still confined to bed I asked Mr. Aveling<sup>1</sup> to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day. The following is a record of his conversation.

'I had a long interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning, in the course of which I raised as subjects of conversation, all questions of immediate interest in the field of foreign affairs.

2. I opened the conversation by telling Monsieur Beck that I had this morning seen Mr. Eden on his way through to Moscow and had been able to have a short conversation with him regarding his visit to Berlin. Mr. Eden, I said, had asked me to convey to him his *salutations* and to tell him that he was much looking forward to the discussions he would have with him on his return from Moscow. Monsieur Beck, after reciprocating Mr. Eden's good wishes, at once asked me whether I could tell him what impressions Mr. Eden had formed as a result of the conversations at Berlin. I explained that in the short time available it had been quite impossible to enter into any details regarding those discussions, and that in any case I thought it would be preferable not to embark upon that subject until Mr. Eden's return when he himself would explain fully and without reserve exactly what had taken place both at Berlin and at Moscow. I could however tell him that the conversations at Berlin had led Mr. Eden to feel that whilst there was no cause either for undue optimism or exaggerated pessimism, a great deal had been accomplished in clearing the atmosphere and thus in achieving the principal object of the mission, which was of an exploratory nature designed with the object of having all the cards put on the table and a clear understanding reached as to the true aims and purposes to which the policies of the countries visited were directed. As to the course and results of the discussions I could tell him little more than he would have already gathered from press telegrams from Berlin, which indicated the main lines of German policy in

<sup>1</sup> First Secretary at H.M. Embassy, Warsaw.

regard to the questions of the Eastern Pact, disarmament, the Central European Pact, and the return of Germany to the League of Nations.

3. Monsieur Beck expressed on more than one occasion during the course of the conversation the immense importance which he attached to the British visits to Berlin and other capitals. The situation in Europe generally, he said, was serious and it was possible that the British visits would afford the last opportunity of finding a wise and general solution of the existing *malaise*. No country, he continued, was in so good a position as the United Kingdom to act as a go-between and mediator between the conflicting policies of the principal European Powers. Poland's whole foreign policy was based on a sense of realism and a desire to eschew considerations of a purely logical or juridical nature. It was this policy which had guided the Polish Government in recent years, not only in regard to her pacts with Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but also in the matter of German armaments.

4. I took this opportunity to enquire what was Monsieur Beck's reaction to recent events in Germany, and notably to the unilateral denunciation by the German Government of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. Monsieur Beck replied that Germany's action had undoubtedly exacerbated an already dangerous feeling of insecurity in Europe, but he refused to take an alarmist view of the situation which was in the Polish Government's opinion merely a logical and inevitable outcome of developments that had been taking place in Germany for a long time. In his opinion there was no cause for alarm nor did he consider that there was any such imminent risk of a European war as some people would have him believe. One must understand, he said, and make allowances for German psychology and face the present situation from a realistic point of view. Could I tell him, he enquired, what, as a result of the conversations at Berlin, were the prospects of a disarmament convention. I replied that to judge by a Berlin communiqué there was perhaps a possibility of Germany agreeing not to maintain the thirty-six divisions, which she claimed to be necessary, at their full strength, but in view of Hitler's obsession regarding the menace of Communist Russia, I imagined that much would depend on what the Soviets were themselves prepared to do in the way of disarmament. At this stage of the conversation, I enquired what had been the action taken by the Polish Government at Berlin in regard to the German conscription law of March 16th.<sup>2</sup> Monsieur Beck replied that he had instructed the Polish Ambassador at Berlin to make verbal representations to the German Government and to call their attention to the grave consequences which Germany's action might have on the European international situation.<sup>3</sup> A protest had not been made, since in his opinion it could have served no useful purpose. The German reply to the Polish *démarche*,<sup>4</sup> which was also given verbally, followed the general lines of the replies given to France, Italy and ourselves.

5. I then asked Monsieur Beck what were his opinions on the French action in calling for an extraordinary meeting of the League Council to

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 570.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 640.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, Nos. 538 and 553.



consider Germany's unilateral denunciation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. Monsieur Beck said that, again looking at matters from a purely realistic point of view, he failed to see the wisdom of the step taken by France. No useful purpose he thought could be served by the League of Nations whereas there was a grave risk that the result of a League meeting might be to undermine still further the waning prestige of that body. Even if agreement could be reached as to the text of an anodyne resolution, pointing out that Germany had violated a treaty, what possible good could such a resolution do to France or to Europe? It would merely tend to advertise the impotency of the League to exercise one of the primary functions assigned to her under the Covenant. Monsieur Beck added that he had been consulted by the President of the League Council regarding the convocation of the special Session and had replied accepting the invitation to attend, but he greatly hoped that between now and the date fixed for the meeting, some means would have been found to render such a session unnecessary. But however that might be, Poland would loyally carry out her obligations as a member of the League and agree to whatever course of action the general sense of the Council considered wise and suitable.

6. The conversation then turned to the subject of the Eastern Pact, regarding which Monsieur Beck stated that for reasons already well known, the Polish Government could not agree to the Pact in its present form, since in his opinion, it was likely to damage rather than improve the striking results which the bilateral pacts that Poland had concluded with Russia and Germany had brought about. None the less he held no rigid or doctrinaire views on the subject and it would be quite wrong to assume that the Polish Government would necessarily reject anything in the nature of a multilateral pact. Any concrete and practicable proposals that Mr. Eden after his visit to Berlin and Moscow might be in a position to put before the Polish Government would be considered entirely on its [? their] merits. The Polish Government would in fact welcome any suggestions that he might have to make. For their part the Polish Government did not intend to put forward any proposals of their own as they considered that Mr. Eden, after studying the German and Soviet views on the subject, would be far better placed to put forward suggestions likely to be generally acceptable.

7. On the general subject of Polish-German relations, I told Monsieur Beck that as he was no doubt himself fully aware, there were, rightly or wrongly, many people who believed that Poland had gone further in the direction of Germany than the mere terms of the non-aggression pact and the consequent improvement in the Polish-German atmosphere that had resulted, rendered necessary or perhaps even desirable. Though I personally attached little importance to the frequent rumours that were current regarding the intimacy of Polish-German relations, I had been surprised at the degree of credence that was attached to them, and had been particularly struck by articles in the English papers which seemed to accept as a *fait accompli* the fact that Poland had in some way or other bound herself to Germany. Monsieur Beck stated most categorically that there was no

foundation whatever for such a misconception, and that the false rumours to which I had alluded and of which he himself was fully aware were entirely devoid of truth. I cited as a recent example of the sort of rumour which I had in mind, that which was current both in Warsaw and Berlin to the effect that General Goering had in the course of his visit to Warsaw in January informed the Polish Government of their intention to introduce conscription at an early date. Monsieur Beck emphatically denied the truth of the report, adding that the question of armed forces and Part V of the Treaty of Versailles had not so much as been mentioned during the conversations with General Goering.<sup>5</sup> Monsieur Beck continued that any country placed as Poland was between two great Powers with whom relations had been traditionally bad, would have acted in precisely the same way as Poland had, namely, to seize any and every opportunity that offered to put their relations with them on a peaceful and reasonable footing. Poland had realised the benefits which resulted from the non-aggression pact with Russia<sup>6</sup> and seized the opportunity to conclude a similar agreement with Germany. The benefits of the latter to Poland must surely be obvious to everyone. As illustrative of these benefits, Monsieur Beck alluded to Danzig.

8. The subject of Danzig gave me an opening to enquire whether the Polish Government felt any concern regarding the forthcoming elections in Danzig and the probable result of a substantial increase in the Nazi vote. Did the Polish Government, I asked, consider, particularly in the light of the recent plebiscite in the Saar territory, that there was any risk of the vote being regarded as a plebiscite in favour of a return of the Free City to the Reich? Monsieur Beck said that admittedly he had felt some misgivings as to what the elections might portend, and it was for that reason that he had instructed the Polish Commissioner at Danzig to approach the President of the Free City Senate and to ask for a frank statement of Nazi intentions. As a result of this step his fears had been completely removed, since Herr Greiser had given him a written assurance to the effect that the Nazi authorities, whatever the results of the elections, had no intention of challenging Polish rights in the Free City, nor of calling into question the Statute and Constitution laid down by the Peace Treaty and the League respectively.<sup>7</sup> Minor difficulties Monsieur Beck added were certain to occur in the course of the pre-electoral period, and he had only recently had to make a protest to the Senate of the Free City regarding the treatment of Polish citizens. Such minor incidents would probably recur, but he had no reason to think that they would endanger the smooth and satisfactory relations between Poland and the Danzig territory which had subsisted since the conclusion of the Pact with Germany.<sup>8</sup>

Repeated to Berlin No. 6, Paris unnumbered.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In a minute of March 29 Mr. Creswell remarked that this denial by M. Beck was 'in direct contradiction with Berlin tel. 82 Saving [No. 623]. Either Herr v. Bülow or M. Beck has been lying heavily.'

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 111, note 2.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 500.

<sup>8</sup> In a minute of March 29 Mr. Wigram remarked that this telegram 'ought to have been a despatch, I think. Mr. Eden will not be making a proposal to the Poles: he is gathering information. Warsaw has been told to send this to Moscow by first opportunity.'

No. 654

*Sir J. Addison (Prague) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 30)*  
*No. 6 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2676/55/18]*

PRAGUE, March 27, 1935

The signature, on 25th March, at Prague, of a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Czechoslovakia and the U.S.S.R. was made the occasion of a declaration, both by Dr. Beneš and by the Soviet representative, of the determination of their respective countries to work together closely, for the maintenance of the peace of Europe.

Local press comment on the Berlin and Moscow visits also emphasises the importance of the Eastern Pact; 'Česke Slovo' stating that the prime necessity is that British diplomacy should ensure the signature of this instrument. Hitler's object, on the other hand, is to win the support of Great Britain against Soviet Russia.

Dr. Beneš travelled to Bratislava on 26th March in order to meet M. Titulesco, who is now stated in the press to have left for Geneva, Paris, and London.

Repeated to Bucharest No. 1 Saving of March 27th.

No. 655

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 28, 11.25 a.m.)*  
*No. 44 Telegraphic: by telephone [N 1581/1167/38]*

Immediate

MOSCOW, March 28, 1935

Following from Mr. Eden:—

I anticipate that I may be asked in the course of conversations with Monsieur Litvinov whether His Majesty's Government would have any objection to Soviet Government, Baltic States, Czechoslovakia and France entering into an eastern pact amongst themselves on the understanding that such pact would be open to access of Poland and Germany but would be operative between signatories whether the other two Powers acceded [*sic*] or not. If so should I reply that we should enter no protest against any such arrangement provided it were under auspices of the League.

You will recall that when in Berlin we invited German Government to send their representative to London for bilateral Naval conversations as preliminary to Naval Conference.<sup>1</sup> Is it intended that Soviet Government shall be invited to participate in Naval Conference? If so it would be much appreciated if I could invite Soviet Government to send a representative for bilateral conversations in the same light as we have invited German Government. I attach some importance to this for we must expect that Soviet Government will hear of invitation to Germany and not to extend a like invitation to Soviet Government might create offence.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 651, pp. 728-9, 739-40.

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 28, 3.40 p.m.)  
No. 45 Telegraphic [C 2593/55/18]*

MOSCOW, *March 28, 1935, 4.46 p.m.*

Following from Mr. Eden.

During the thirty-six hours train journey there has been opportunity to think over results of our Berlin conversations and I venture to submit a few personal reflections for what they may be worth.

The essential question seems to be does a basis now exist for a general European settlement? A year ago I believe there was such a basis but it is exceedingly difficult to maintain that it exists now. An important purpose of our visit to Berlin was to learn whether German Government was willing to take her place at Geneva. We now know she will not do so except at a price which includes return of her colonies and probably other unspecified conditions as well. It would seem in principle that quite apart from merits of this demand it is highly undesirable to establish a precedent that a bribe should be offered to any nation in any circumstances to induce it to take its proper place as a good European at Geneva. Moreover since Germany in leaving the League acted without justification in the view of His Majesty's Government and of most other Governments, will it not merely encourage her in her blackmail to offer a price for her return?

Apart altogether from question of Germany's return to the League is there elsewhere any basis of agreement? Germany's demands on land and at sea, in respect of neither of which is there any sign of abatement, seems to make an agreement impossible, while her attitude to Eastern Pact and Danubian Pact makes any security agreement extremely doubtful to say the least.

If as it would seem from this analysis there is in fact no basis for a general settlement, what should be the policy of His Majesty's Government? It should be borne in mind that in view of Germany's demand in respect of Colonies our position is no longer merely that of an honest broker. We have now become a principal. In such conditions it remains to be considered whether there may not be only one course of action open to us: to join with those Powers who are members of the League of Nations in re-affirming our faith in that institution and our determination to uphold the principles of the Covenant. It may be that the spectacle of the Great Powers of the League re-affirming their intention to collaborate more closely than ever is not only the sole means of bringing home to Germany that the inevitable effect of persisting in her present policy will be to consolidate against her all those nations which believe in collective system, but will also tend to give confidence to those less powerful nations which through fear of Germany's growing strength might otherwise be drawn into her orbit.

No. 657

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Phipps (Berlin)*

*No. 76 Telegraphic [C 2589/55/18]*

*Immediate*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 28, 1935, 9 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 84 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

The two passages which you quote read as follows:—

‘Sir John Simon thought we had 690 first-line machines or 880, if allowance was made for certain naval machines’ and ‘The first-line strength of that force was 690 machines, though the separate navy organisation of 190 machines might perhaps also be included’. As the Air Attaché points out, there has been a misunderstanding.

The figure of 690 machines is that stated by the Under-Secretary for Air in the House of Commons on March 19th<sup>2</sup> as the total first-line strength in the United Kingdom. This figure includes the machines of the fleet air arm in home waters and machines of the non-regular units in the United Kingdom.

In the circumstances, the best thing will be for you to tell Baron von Neurath at once that the figure was incorrectly stated and that the total first-line strength in the United Kingdom is 690 machines, as stated in the House on March 19th. You should add that this figure includes the machines of the fleet air arm in home waters.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram of March 27, received at 4 p.m. on March 28, Sir E. Phipps referred to figures of British air strength which Sir J. Simon had been represented as giving during the conversation with Herr Hitler on the morning of March 26 and said that the Air Attaché had pointed out that these figures ‘considerably exceed those sent to him in a comparative table by the Air Ministry’.

<sup>2</sup> See 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 1091.

<sup>3</sup> A note on the draft of this telegram states that the ‘Air Ministry concur’. Cf. No. 698 below. The figure ‘880’ was not retained in the final minutes (see No. 651, pp. 735 and 738), but it was recorded in Herr Schmidt’s memorandum; cf. *ibid.*, note 1.

No. 658

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 29, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 20 Telegraphic [C 2646/55/18]*

WARSAW, *March 28, 1935, 9.10 p.m.*

In the course of conversation yesterday<sup>1</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs told Mr. Aveling that whilst Polish Government’s objections to Eastern Pact were well known he wished to make it clear that though they preferred bilateral pacts they did not necessarily reject idea of a multilateral arrangement. His mind was quite open on the subject and he would welcome any suggestions that Mr. Eden might be in a position to make as a result of Berlin and Moscow visits. He himself did not propose to put forward any proposals of his own.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 653.

French Ambassador, who before seeing Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday enquired whether latter had spoken of Eastern Pact, was informed as above. He said that he had just received instructions from Paris to renew representations to Polish Government to call their attention to altered circumstances brought about by German re-armament and law of March 16th and to urge them to reconsider their attitude to Franco-Soviet pact.

Monsieur Beck spoke to him in much the same lines as he had to Mr. Aveling, adding that he preferred to say nothing more pending conversations with Mr. Eden.

Repeated to Moscow, Berlin and Paris.

No. 659

*Sir J. Simon to Viscount Chilston (Moscow)*

*No. 62 Telegraphic [N 1581/1167/38]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 28, 1935, 10 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 44.<sup>1</sup>

Following for Mr. Eden:

Although it would be difficult to form an opinion as to how an Eastern Pact would operate without the collaboration of either Poland or Germany, we would, *prima facie*, have no grounds for objecting to an attempt being made to formulate such a Pact, provided that accession of Poland and Germany was kept open, and provided that it operated under the auspices of the League. But I hope that M. Litvinov will not press you to give any assurance or undertaking in the matter in present circumstances, for it is desirable that the whole situation should be kept as fluid as possible pending the Stresa Conference. It would be most undesirable that any Government should before that Conference meets have committed themselves to any scheme or assumed any undertakings which might limit the freedom of action of the three Governments who are to discuss the whole situation at Stresa. I propose to impress upon the French and Italian Governments the importance of bearing this in mind. I presume that you will not think it necessary to go into great detail on all topics in the Berlin conversations. I have refused to give details to the House of Commons<sup>2</sup> on the ground that a series of visits are in progress and the position is under investigation as a whole.

2. It is certainly our hope that Soviet Russia will participate in any general naval conference which may be held. When the appropriate moment arrives we should welcome bilateral naval talks with representatives of the Soviet Government but until the proposed discussion with the Germans have taken place, we think it would be premature to fix a date for further conversations.

<sup>1</sup> No. 655.

<sup>2</sup> For Sir J. Simon's reply to a question by Mr. Lansbury on March 28 relating to the Anglo-German conversations, see 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 2083.

*Confidential*

3. I am not making any statement for the moment, either in Parliament or elsewhere, as to the intention to hold naval conversations with the Germans in London so that you may find it unnecessary to mention this subject in Moscow. In any case we should like to avoid publicity on the point as much as possible, in view of Japanese susceptibilities.

**No. 660**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 29, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 87 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2600/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 28, 1935

Monsieur de Brinon, the French journalist, called on me this afternoon. He lunched yesterday with French Ambassador and Herr von Ribbentrop and was received by the Chancellor this morning.

Chancellor expressed great satisfaction at your visit though admitting differences in the British and German points of view. He said that you had probably come here believing him to be an ogre and he thought that you now realised that he was like anybody else. He declared that he was opposed to any military alliances but if one must be formed why should it not be between France, Germany and Great Britain? He said that Germany would reduce her army if Russia did likewise. He accused Czechoslovakia of being an aerial bridge-head of Russia directed against Germany. (See my letter of February 5th to Mr. Sargent).<sup>1</sup>

Herr von Ribbentrop told French Ambassador that he felt that there was a much greater chance of a Franco-German understanding now that Germany was an equal party. He declared that before eighteen months there would be agreement between our three countries, although this might be considered foolishly optimistic.

Repeated to Paris.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

**No. 661**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 29, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 88 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2601/55/18]*

*Confidential*

BERLIN, March 28, 1935

1. General Goering sent for Ward Price suddenly today and after some preliminary skirmishing came to the point. What he asked was Ward Price's candid opinion about Locarno. Did he really believe that if France were guilty of the most palpable aggression England would intervene on Germany's behalf with her armed forces.

2. Ward Price answered in the affirmative remarking that he did not see how England could calmly ignore her pledged word. General Goering seemed unconvinced and after some further talk explained the grounds for his anxiety. He had put the question to Mr. Eden he said during his sojourn in Berlin only to elicit the unsatisfactory reply that England had no soldiers. He gained the impression from Mr. Eden's manner that England would not intervene though she might use economic pressure against France.

3. The above interchange seems ominous to me.

4. If General Goering and Herr Hitler come to the conclusion that Locarno is a dead letter it may lead them to reoccupy demilitarized zone sooner than they would otherwise do. Should you deem it advisable to include some statement about Locarno when you are speaking in the House, German misgivings might be dispelled.

Ward Price leaves Berlin for London tomorrow. He will of course make no use of his conversation and hopes it will be regarded as highly confidential. He does not wish Germans to think that he is in such close touch with us.

It is his very definite impression that General Goering has lost all faith in Locarno.

I presume that there is a misunderstanding somewhere and that Mr. Eden has been misunderstood.

Repeated to Moscow by telegraph.

## No. 662

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 29)*

*No. 305 [C 2639/55/18]*

BERLIN, March 28, 1935

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 269 of March 18th<sup>1</sup> I have the honour to inform you that the Liaison Officer at the Reichsluftfahrtministerium has told the Air Attaché that it is unlikely that the Conscription Law will apply to the German Air Force as one year is thought too short. Colonel Wenninger added that, in his personal opinion it would be better to make the German Air Force a voluntary service.

2. It is evident that for efficiency's sake such a highly technical service as an Air Force is bound to have a large proportion of its personnel on a long service basis as is the case in France. Group Captain Don thinks it highly probable that the continued existence of the Deutsche Luftsportverband, as a large State subsidized and controlled civilian organisation, will enable the German Air Ministry to train pilots and ground personnel up to a fairly high standard of flying and technical efficiency, which would in effect increase the length of service of those who are selected from that body for transfer to regular service—either as conscripts or permanent personnel.

<sup>1</sup> This formal despatch transmitted to the Foreign Office the German text and an English translation of the German Government's proclamation of March 16; cf. No. 570.



3. I would suggest therefore that if length of service in the German Air Force becomes a controlling factor in any proposed Convention, the existence of the Deutsche Luftsportverband should be borne in mind. The same would apply if Budgetary expenditure were discussed as a factor.

4. Group Captain Don is not yet certain if the Deutsche Verkehrsfliegerschule will continue as a separate body. It is nominally the training organisation for commercial pilots, but actually it has grown into a large organisation, from which the German Air Force has sprung. It may revert and shrink to its proper sphere of supplying the comparatively few pilots required for Commercial flying. If not, it also should be borne in mind as a factor, in the same way as the Deutsche Luftsportverband. No similar source exists for the supply of partially trained personnel for the German Army and Navy, except perhaps the 'Arbeitsdienst', which certainly teaches discipline and marching.

I have, &c.,

ERIC PHIPPS

No. 663

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 29)*

*No. 493 [C 2656/55/18]*

PARIS, March 28, 1935

Sir,

On the eve of M. Laval's visit to Moscow, a comprehensive review of Franco-Soviet relations, as seen from this post, may be of some interest.

2. Up to 1931 Franco-Soviet relations were consistently bad. In August 1927 the Government of the U.S.S.R. suggested the conclusion of a pact of non-aggression, but, although the French Government declared their readiness to negotiate, the proposal was allowed to lapse with the general breakdown of the Franco-Soviet debt negotiations. The French decree of October 3rd, 1930, directed against Soviet dumping, and the retaliatory Soviet decree of October 20th virtually put an end to all trade intercourse between the two countries. The resulting situation hit the French metallurgical industry particularly hard and it was the influence of the Comité des Forges which first induced the Government to resume the negotiations. In the summer of 1931 the French Government intimated their readiness to discuss a pact of non-aggression as part of a general negotiation including a conciliation agreement and a commercial *modus vivendi*. While the incentive was thus mainly commercial, the French Government were not unwilling to dispel the fiction then prevalent that France was preparing a military campaign against the Soviets. Negotiations were also opened at the same time by the Soviets with the Polish Government for the conclusion of a similar pact of non-aggression. The Franco-Soviet negotiations proceeded with the greatest difficulty, but finally a non-aggression agreement was initialled in August on the understanding that neither Government would be bound by it until the conciliation and commercial agreements were also concluded. The atmosphere remained full of mistrust and by the beginning of 1932 no further

progress had been made. In the meanwhile, the Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact had been initialled but its ratification remained conditional on the conclusion of the Roumanian-Soviet pact, which had long been under discussion, whilst ratification of the Franco-Soviet arrangement was made conditional on the ratification of both. The Franco-Soviet commercial negotiations had completely failed for the reason that the Soviets invariably demanded credits which the French Government refused unless there were at the same time a debt settlement.

3. In May 1932 the French elections overthrew M. Tardieu's Government and its Nationalist majority, who were replaced by M. Herriot with a Cartel majority of Radicals and Socialists. A certain change of attitude at once became evident. The French Government no longer sought to make the conclusion of the non-aggression pact dependent on a commercial agreement but came to regard the Soviets as desirable political associates in themselves, whilst for the first time the view was expressed that it would attenuate the potential menace of a Russo-German combination based on public or secret engagements. The French Government continued, however, to subordinate their signature to the conclusion of the pacts under discussion with Poland and Roumania. The negotiations with Roumania broke down repeatedly over her attempts to secure the insertion in the pact of a clause which would be equivalent to the recognition by the Soviets of Roumanian sovereignty over Bessarabia. At length the French Government intimated to the Roumanian Government that they could not wait indefinitely, and on November 30th the Franco-Soviet non-aggression agreement, to which was joined a conciliation convention, was signed in Paris,<sup>1</sup> the Polish-Soviet treaty being ratified at the same time. Some satisfaction was given to Roumania by a letter of November 9th from the Soviet Ambassador to M. Herriot reaffirming the pacific sentiments of the Soviet Union in regard to Roumania.<sup>2</sup>

4. It was during the year 1933 that French policy towards Soviet Russia underwent the most distinct change in the sense of rapprochement. M. Herriot, who had been responsible for the signature of the pact in the previous autumn, now developed from a moderate into a fervent advocate of closer Franco-Soviet relations, partly owing to pique at the failure of Signor Mussolini to respond to his overtures when still in power, and partly to the impression made upon him by the steady rise of national-socialism in Germany. His views, however, were still conspicuously in advance of those of the majority of his countrymen. In the meanwhile, from the Soviet side, had come the friendly reception accorded to the French disarmament plan by M. Litvinov at Geneva.<sup>3</sup> In March it was announced that the Soviet Govern-

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this Agreement, which was signed at Paris on November 29, 1932, see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 135, pp. 509-13. Cf. *Documents Diplomatiques Français 1932-1939*, 1re Série (1932-5), vol. ii (Paris, 1966), Nos. 29 and 48.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *D.D.F.*, *op. cit.*, vol. i (Paris, 1964), No. 314.

<sup>3</sup> See *ibid.*, No. 331, for the text of the French disarmament plan of November 14, 1932, and for M. Litvinov's comments, see the minutes of the 31st meeting of the *General Commission of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments*, held at Geneva on February 6, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.

ment had agreed to the appointment of a French Military Attaché, whilst M. Alphand, M. Herriot's former 'chef de cabinet', proceeded to Moscow as Ambassador. In a debate in the Chamber in May, a motion expressing satisfaction at the exchange of ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact was passed by 554 votes to 1 (M. Tardieu's). M. Litvinov himself visited Paris in July, when he was at pains to emphasise the anxiety of the Soviets to avoid war, as illustrated by their accession to the Briand-Kellogg Pact and their participation in the proceedings at Geneva for the determination of the aggressor. In August M. Herriot paid one of his visits to Russia. In September M. Pierre Cot, French Air Minister and also a leading Left wing Radical, conducted a military air visit to Moscow with a view to exchanging technical information on air questions. In the meanwhile, in the warmer political relations thus engendered there had been a resumption of the commercial negotiations, although they only resulted in an agreement which was both provisional and partial in character.

5. The next stage is covered by M. Barthou's tenure of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs from February 1934 up to his assassination in the following October. The rise of national-socialism in Germany had been continuing steadily during the winter, whilst Germany's withdrawal from the League and the increasing stiffness of her attitude towards disarmament had the effect of causing many who had so far refused to respond to M. Herriot's campaign to look upon Russia in a new light. A fresh factor making for Franco-Soviet rapprochement now appeared in what was regarded as the defection of Poland, whose agreement with Germany had been concluded in January and was held to constitute a fatal breach in the system of satellite States round Germany. This undoubtedly helped to convert the military mind to the new orientation. At the same time, Soviet fears of Japanese aggression in the Far Eastern provinces as well as suspicion of German and Polish intentions in regard to the Ukraine were inducing a great change of opinion in Moscow, where it was apparently decided about this time that Soviet interests would best be served by close rapprochement with France and the Little Entente and by a general support of the treaty system in Europe. This new policy culminated in the spring in the offer to France of a Franco-Soviet alliance.<sup>4</sup> The French Government, who were still definitely opposed to any bilateral military arrangement with the Soviets, expanded the proposal into the Eastern Pact of mutual assistance, to include Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic States, and Germany, with France undertaking to guarantee Russia in the east and Russia guaranteeing France in the west. This plan, as further amended during M. Barthou's visit in July, was then formally presented to the other Powers with the sponsorship of His Majesty's Government.<sup>5</sup> M. Barthou intimated at the time, however, that if Germany or Poland refused to join, France might be obliged to fall back on the original Soviet offer of an alliance. In September the U.S.S.R., under French auspices, became a member of the League. Both Poland and Germany have hitherto declined to accept the pact.

<sup>4</sup> See Volume VI, Nos. 426 and 428.

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, No. 493.

6. From the above summary, it will be seen that the first incentive to revive Franco-Russian relations came from purely commercial interests which, led by the powerful metallurgical industry, forced a comparatively reluctant nationalist Government to start negotiations for a non-aggression pact and commercial agreement. The next stage came with the victory of the Left at the 1932 elections when M. Herriot became President of the Council. The incentive now came no longer from the commercial interests but from the political principles of the Radical and Socialist parties which combined to form the Cartel majority. Up to this point no military considerations had appeared: Russia did not enter seriously into the calculations of the General Staff. It was natural enough for the Radicals and Socialists to seek good, if non-committal, relations with Soviet Russia as it was natural for them to have abhorred such relations in the past with Tsarist Russia. The big business interests which controlled the nationalist parties naturally wished to revive the important market which had existed in Russia. The rest of the French people, most of whom had lost their savings in Russia, regarded with positive dislike any policy of rapprochement.

7. At this point the triumph of Herr Hitler produced a galvanic effect. His assumption of supreme power, Germany's withdrawal from the League and from the Disarmament Conference, the flagrant re-armament and military training, the Nazi persecution of the Jews and Socialists combined to dismay almost every section of opinion in France. To this was joined the effect of the Polish defection which opened a breach in the containing wall just at the moment when it seemed most likely to be needed. Whilst all this was more than enough to turn the mercurial M. Herriot from a kindly but academic patron of the Soviets into a fiery apostle with a mission, it was also sufficient to convert men like M. Barthou and the General Staff to entirely new views. When therefore M. Litvinov made his offer in the spring, the French Government were fully disposed to take it up and fashion it to their purpose.

8. France, with the exception of M. Herriot, was still opposed to a military alliance. French policy aimed rather at using Russia to take the place of Poland, which had become unreliable, in the collective system for containing Germany or any other eventual aggressor. Since the 1932 elections France had been steadily moving away from the satellite system (old style) which was only held together by a network of military alliances, towards a non-exclusive collective system based on Geneva which, divided into regional arrangements designed to avert specific dangers, would, it was hoped, end by embracing the whole of Europe. The new system was in fact the Herriot-Boncour plan (revived from the Protocol of 1924)<sup>6</sup> of organised security by means of the automatic intervention of all States members of the League. It was into this framework that M. Barthou now proceeded to fit M. Litvinov's proposal by insisting on the Soviets joining the League and by converting the proffered alliance into a regional pact of mutual assistance.

<sup>6</sup> The protocol for the pacific settlement of international disputes, adopted by the Assembly of the League of Nations on October 2, 1924, but not brought into force, is printed as item No. 3 in Cmd. 2273 of 1924.

9. Some reference must now be made to the reaction of the course of the Disarmament Conference on the new Franco-Soviet alignment. The labours of the conference had always been brought to a standstill in front of the gulf between the German demands and the concession which France was prepared to make. That gulf, in French opinion, could only be bridged by a watertight automatic system of guarantees or by a system of military alliances. His Majesty's Government were unable to accept a guarantee going beyond Locarno. Moreover, the collective system based on Geneva can also only be made effective in French eyes if His Majesty's Government are an active partner, albeit with limited commitments. The French Government now fully understand that His Majesty's Government are only prepared to join in a collective system on terms of strictly limited liability, and it was chiefly to meet this difficulty that they evolved the idea of regional pacts. If the Central and Eastern pacts materialise, if the Air Convention for the Locarno Powers is also concluded, then it will also be possible in French opinion to conclude an arms limitation convention, subject to certain conditions of which we are aware. But the pacts are vital to the plan and, to play their rôle, they must provide for mutual assistance—if not between all, at least between certain of the parties. If the Eastern Pact falls through, the French Government will be thrown back on some form of mutual guarantee with Russia, which might be left open to Germany's signature in order to reassure her that it was not directed against her except for purposes of defence.

10. I do not think that many Frenchmen are under any illusion in regard to the value of Russian military assistance in the field. The General Staff, indeed, hold the view that the Soviet army, though capable of defending Russian soil, will not for many years be in a position to assume the offensive outside its own frontiers. Perhaps the principal value of the arrangement in the eyes of informed opinion is that it would deny to Germany the possibility of exploiting the massive resources of Russia. If, therefore, it did not bring Russia into war on the side of France and her allies, it would at least keep her out of it altogether. It is fully realised that so long as Herr Hitler is in command of the destinies of the Reich there will be no rapprochement between Germany and Russia. But who can say when Herr Hitler may disappear? The Ministry for Foreign Affairs have long claimed to have information that among the Reichswehr there is a strong party in favour of a rapprochement, or even an alliance, with Russia, and that a similar tendency exists in Soviet ruling circles. Finally, it is believed, rightly or wrongly, that it would be possible, by sending French engineers to Russia, to organise the output of Soviet arsenals and thus obtain valuable supplies of Russian war materials and oil. M. Flandin himself believes that in any future war, if not over in a few days, victory will turn on the daily output of aircraft. His idea is that with French designs and French supervision it would be a matter of a comparatively short time before large numbers of machines could be turned out which could either be flown to France or used for attack against Germany from the Russian side.

11. Whether the value attached to Russian assistance be exaggerated or not, I am of opinion that there is no element of bluff in the statement that if the Eastern Pact fails to materialise France will inevitably be thrown back on some form of alliance with Russia. Remarks to that effect, reported in numerous messages from this Embassy, were first made many months ago with every appearance of being genuine. It must be remembered that M. Herriot, who is an ardent advocate of a Franco-Russian alliance of which he considers he sowed the first seeds, retains considerable influence both in the Government and outside. When the General Staff joins forces with him, as it has done, the combination becomes a very powerful one; and I have reason to believe that M. Léger was stating the facts when he claimed that it is largely due to him that the French Government have hitherto resisted the pressure from M. Litvinov. M. Laval provisionally adopted his department's policy, which is directed to the organisation of regional security on a collective basis rather than to the formation of fresh alliances. But how long he will resist the pressure of the Herriot faction among his colleagues remains to be seen. My own belief is that he is nearing the point where he will succumb. Indeed, I think he may come to terms with M. Litvinov during his forthcoming visit to Moscow. It would in fact not surprise me if his decision to postpone that visit until after the meeting at Stresa had been, partly at least, due to his intention to clinch matters in Moscow if the result of the Stresa meeting appeared to justify him in doing so. He agreed with M. Litvinov, as you will remember, that neither would initiate any fresh negotiation until the fate of the Eastern Pact were known.<sup>7</sup> It seems to me quite on the cards that at the same time he may have given assurances of sorts that if it fell through he would delay no longer in concluding a bilateral arrangement of some kind.

12. Since this despatch was drafted, the news of the Berlin conversations, as reported here, has certainly increased the tendency of the French Government to come to a direct agreement with the Soviets, and such a policy will now find support even in those sections of French public opinion among which it has hitherto been lacking.

13. I have sent a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Moscow.

I have, &c.,  
GEORGE R. CLERK

<sup>7</sup> Cf. No. 253, note 4.

**No. 664**

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris) and Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 84<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [C 2662/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 29, 1935, 10 a.m.*

Please inform French/Italian Government of my view that it would be most undesirable that any of our three Governments should before the Stresa Conference have committed themselves to any scheme or assumed any undertakings which might limit the freedom of action of the three Governments who are to discuss the whole situation at Stresa.

<sup>1</sup> No. 84 to Paris, No. 225 to Rome.

**No. 665**

*Sir J. Simon to Viscount Chilston (Moscow)*

*No. 63 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2598/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 29, 1935, 1.30 p.m.*

My telegram No. 62.<sup>1</sup>

Following for Mr. Eden.

Last two sentences of paragraph 1 do not of course mean that you should refrain from using your full discretion as to how much to say in your conversations. My feeling was that you should *volunteer* a very substantial outline of what passed in Berlin, and that while you would probably not wish to volunteer every detail you will no doubt think it right to answer with complete frankness any questions put to you. This is the more necessary as the French Government are already very fully informed.

We all have as you know complete confidence in your judgment on these points and I only send this telegram in case the wording of the message in my telegram No. 62 should have been misunderstood.

<sup>1</sup> No. 659.

**No. 666**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 29, 4.50 p.m.)*

*No. 69 Telegraphic [C 2659/55/18]*

PARIS, *March 29, 1935, 3.45 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 82.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of démenti from Berlin and of your reply to Mr. Lansbury and your comment in telegram under reference,<sup>2</sup> which I made known in the proper quarters, French press today is much quieter.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram of March 28 transmitted the text of Sir J. Simon's reply in the House of Commons on that day to a question by Mr. Lansbury relating to the Anglo-German conversations; cf. No. 659, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> This appears to be a reference to Foreign Office telegram No. 83 of March 28 which said that a démenti of the alleged terms of Herr Hitler's proposals to the British Government, as published in the *Daily Telegraph* of March 27, were to be found in Sir J. Simon's statement in the House of Commons on March 28 (see note 1).

2. On the other hand it is significant that the Chamber refused last night to rise for the recess as M. Flandin wished. No doubt this may be partly due to internal politics, but it is certainly also attributed by [*sic*] uneasiness felt over present political situation of Europe.

**No. 667**

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 29, 7.45 p.m.)  
No. 47 Telegraphic [C 2663/55/18]*

MOSCOW, March 29, 1935, 9.20 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden:

Berlin telegram No. 88 (Saving).<sup>1</sup>

General Goering has of course completely, and I suppose we must assume accidentally, misunderstood what passed in light chaff. Conversation to which he presumably refers took place at a dinner given by the Chancellor. General Goering was sitting next but one to me. At the moment, he leant across the lady between us and made some remark as to whether we would at some time in the past when Germany was still disarmed have sent our army to help Germany if she had been attacked by France. I did not think this the occasion for a serious political conversation and therefore passed it off with a joke. Those who heard the remark undoubtedly took it as such.

No part of the conversation had any serious political significance and indeed German Government cannot have any serious misapprehension of this subject seeing that we repeatedly stressed during Berlin conversations our view of the binding nature of Locarno.

This is a grim warning never to jest with a German, but I must warn you that Stalin and I cracked several this afternoon.

Repeated to Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> No. 661.

**No. 668**

*Mr. Preston (Kovno) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 4)  
No. 36 [C 2826/55/18]*

KOVNO, March 29, 1935

His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Kovno presents his compliments to H.M. Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit to him the under-mentioned document.



*Name and Date*

*Subject*

Mr. T. H. Preston's despatch No. 75  
of the 29th March 1935 to H.M.  
Chargé d'Affaires at Riga.

Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee.

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 668

KOVNO, *March 29, 1935*

Sir,

A few days ago the Latvian Minister called upon me and informed me in strict confidence that, at the beginning of March, the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs had asked him to approach his Government with a view to ascertaining whether they would be prepared to join Lithuania in adhering to an Eastern Pact of Mutual Guarantee to be concluded by Russia, France, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic States, but without the participation of Germany and Poland. M. Seja said that he did not attempt to conceal from M. Lozoraitis his surprise that this new project for an Eastern Pact should emanate from the Lithuanian Foreign Office; especially as he was not aware that the Pact, as originally conceived, i.e. including Germany and Poland, had been finally abandoned by the interested powers. He promised M. Lozoraitis, however, that he would approach his Government in the sense he desired.

2. M. Seja further informed me that he was still more surprised subsequently to learn that, on the Latvian Government, at his instigation, making official enquiries, both at Prague and Moscow, as to whether the Pact in the form suggested by M. Lozoraitis had been contemplated, they had been informed that the question of an instrument in this amended form had never arisen.

3. M. Seja was also unable to account for what he described as M. Lozoraitis' extraordinary manoeuvre, unless it was that he had launched this ballon d'essai in the hopes that it might land and be sympathetically received at Moscow or Prague, especially if supported by the Latvian as well as by the Lithuanian Government.

4. I am forwarding copies of this despatch direct to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and to His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS H. PRESTON

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 30, 11.40 a.m.)*  
*No. 48 Telegraphic [C 2689/55/18]*

*Immediate*

MOSCOW, March 30, 1935, 12.46 p.m.

Following from Mr. Eden:

On the invitation of Monsieur Litvinoff, His Majesty's Ambassador, Mr. Strang and myself had an interview with Stalin and Monsieur Molotov in the latter's room at the Kremlin this afternoon.<sup>1</sup> Monsieur Maisky was also present and Monsieur Litvinoff acted as interpreter. The conversation lasted over an hour.<sup>2</sup>

At the outset it seemed likely to be little more than an exchange of facts and of assurances as to policy of our respective governments but as I was thinking of leaving Stalin launched into an exposition of European situation as he saw it: owing to the exceptional circumstances of the conversation it was not possible to take any written record at the time. Consequently this record can only be an impression of main points made by Stalin.

I assured Stalin that foreign policy of His Majesty's Government being based upon their membership of the League, had as its abiding object the establishment and preservation of peace.

His Majesty's Government had no intention of intervening or promoting or encouraging intervention from any quarter against the Soviet Union or of interfering in her internal affairs. His Majesty's Government recognised that integrity and prosperity of Soviet Union were of advantage for the peace of the world. His Majesty's Government were confident that the Soviet government would govern their relations with His Majesty's Government in the same spirit of collaboration and non-interference which is inherent in their common membership of the League of Nations.

We felt confident that the Soviet government recognised that continued integrity, tranquillity and prosperity of British territories were an advantage to peace.

Monsieur Molotov replied that I had accurately defined attitude of Soviet government towards His Majesty's Government. Soviet government had no desire to interfere in any way in internal affairs of British Empire.

Stalin confirmed that this was so.

Stalin then asked did I consider present European situation alarming and did I regard it as more alarming than situation in 1913? I replied I would use word 'anxious' rather than 'alarming' and that existence of League of Nations of which every European Power but Germany was a member, was an advantage of considerable importance which we lacked before the war.

Stalin replied that, while he agreed as to value of the League he thought international situation was nevertheless fundamentally worse. In 1913 there

<sup>1</sup> i.e. March 29, the day on which this telegram was drafted.

<sup>2</sup> The Earl of Avon in *Facing the Dictators*, pp. 152-3, gives further details as to the background of this meeting, and states that this was 'the first occasion when Stalin received a political representative from the West'.

was only one potential aggressor—Germany—today there were two, Germany and Japan.

Stalin dealt first with Japan and said that while it was true that it would probably take Japan some little time to digest Manchuria, he was confident that she would not rest content with that conquest. It was Japan's policy to endeavour either to overthrow or to dominate the government of Nanking and the opening moves of that game were already being made. I remarked that while fully conscious of the anxieties of the Far Eastern situation it seemed that wise statesmanship of Soviet government in settling difficulty of Chinese Eastern Railway<sup>3</sup> had brought about, for the moment at least, a considerable détente in Russo-Japanese relations; Stalin agreed that this was so but added that this achievement alone was not enough to ensure peace in the Far East.

Stalin went on to speak at some length of Germany. Germans were a great and capable people with exceptional powers of organisation and great industrial strength. Moreover they were smarting under a sense of injury inflicted upon them by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. We must expect that they would be actuated by motives of revenge. Stalin was perhaps more appreciative of German point of view than Monsieur Litvinoff and agreed when I remarked that sympathy created for Germany by some of the actions of other governments since the war had been until recently an important element in world opinion in dealing with Germany. Germany was now losing that sympathy by her own acts. Stalin remarked that German diplomacy was generally clumsy, but maintained that the only way to meet present situation was by some scheme of pacts. Germany must be made to realise that if she attacked any other nation she would have Europe against her. As an illustration he said 'we are six of us in this room; if Maisky choses [*sic*] to go for anyone of us then we must all fall on Maisky'. Only by this means would peace be preserved. League as it was today was not strong enough for this purpose. It had suffered too many humiliations: even Paraguay had been able to flout it with impunity<sup>4</sup> (continuation follows).<sup>5</sup>

Repeated to Berlin, Warsaw, Paris, Brussels and Rome.

<sup>3</sup> On March 23, 1935, agreements were signed by representatives of the U.S.S.R. and Manchukuo regarding the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchukuo; cf. *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, selected and edited by Jane Degras, vol. iii (London, 1953), pp. 120–2.

<sup>4</sup> On December 19, 1934, the Paraguayan Government had rejected proposals made by the League of Nations for the setting up of a neutral supervisory commission in connection with the Chaco dispute between Bolivia and Paraguay, and on February 24, 1935, the Secretary-General had received formal notice of Paraguay's intention to withdraw from the League.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 670 below.

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 30, 1 p.m.)  
No. 49 Telegraphic [C 2690/55/18]*

*Immediate*

*MOSCOW, March 30, 1935, 1.30 p.m.*

Following is continuation of my immediately preceding telegram<sup>1</sup> begins:—

Stalin then spoke of power and influence of the United Kingdom. Much must depend upon part which His Majesty's Government were willing to play in a collective system in the present conditions. It would be fatal to drift since there was no time to lose if a check were to be placed on a potential aggressor. That should be in their power now when actual war was probably some little time distant. At the last moment a check might fail. At a later stage when we were having tea Stalin drew me on one side, pointed to Great Britain on the map of the world and remarked 'that little island if she chooses can stop Germany by refusing those raw materials without which she cannot pursue aggressive designs'.

Stalin gave us details of a curious transaction: some time ago German government had approached Soviet government and almost begged of them to place orders in Germany, for which they had promised Soviet government a long term credit of 200,000,000 marks.<sup>2</sup> To test Germany, Soviet government deliberately included in their list of orders some important contracts of war material. To their astonishment German government accepted those orders 'and now' added Stalin 'Herr Hitler says he is frightened of us'. Germans were also pretending that Soviet government had begged them to give them these credits whereas in fact it was Germany that had made first approaches.

Stalin also complained to us of duplicity of German policy. In this connexion he referred to some story, details of which we cannot recall but which he said was spread by Germans, to the effect that M. Tukhachevski Vice-Commissar of War had had some contact with General Goering and had pressed upon the latter some anti-French scheme. Stalin asked me why Herr Hitler would not take part in any pacts of mutual assistance. I replied that Herr Hitler was reluctant<sup>3</sup> to enter into a pact which would compel him to fight in a quarrel with two other parties in which he was not directly concerned; and that in the event of his having a difference with a neighbour he was prepared to deal with that himself and did not wish to be helped. Stalin remarked drily that rather than help to keep peace Herr Hitler might prefer to make a profit out of differences of others.

At one stage of the conversation Stalin referred to danger of latent hesitant policies pursued by certain countries at a period of international tension. I thereupon explained to him as I had done previously to M. Litvinov

<sup>1</sup> No. 669.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 303; see also *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. ii, No. 476; vol. iii, Nos. 181, 505, 529, 546, 562.

<sup>3</sup> A pencilled correction on the filed copy here read: 'had expressed reluctance'.

(recorded by bag)<sup>4</sup> that it was important to distinguish in these matters between a country such as ourselves with an active and impressionable public opinion which closely followed events and some other countries. It might be that at times we seemed vacillating or hesitant but I begged him to believe that what appeared to him as weakness on our part did not conceal sinister designs at the expense of others. Stalin must not forget His Majesty's Government had world wide interests to consider before they could come to any decision of policy. Our concerns were not only European. Stalin said 'I agree, Great Britain will have to think many times before she comes to a decision on such issues'.

Stalin showed in the course of this conversation a remarkable knowledge and understanding of international affairs.<sup>5</sup> In the latter respect his sympathies seemed broader than those of M. Litvinov though his conclusions were no less firm.

Stalin spoke throughout in measured tones so quiet that at times M. Litvinov himself could not catch what he said. He displayed no emotion whatever except for an occasional chuckle or flash of wit.

Impression left upon us was of a man of strong oriental traits of character with unshakeable assurance and control whose courtesy in no way hid from us an implacable ruthlessness.

<sup>4</sup> See enclosure 2 in No. 673 below, p. 789.

<sup>5</sup> A marginal note by Mr. Eden here reads: 'These are the conclusions I telegraphed home that night.' See No. 669.

## No. 671

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris) and Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 85<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [N 1584/19/59]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 30, 1935, 8.50 p.m.*

His Majesty's Government have not received any reply from the Lithuanian Government to the *démarche* of March 13<sup>2</sup> and they cannot but regard this as yet another sign of the continued unwillingness of the Lithuanian Government to pay attention to the representations of the Signatory Powers. The situation is complicated by the severity of the sentences imposed on the prisoners at the Kovno trial<sup>3</sup> which as you are aware have aroused fierce resentment in Germany and it is feared may even lead to some sudden and disastrous reprisal by Herr Hitler thus creating a further crisis which should have been avoidable with foresight or statesmanship. His Majesty's Government feel that this is a situation which cannot with prudence or expediency be allowed to continue. They propose therefore that the Signatory

<sup>1</sup> No. 85 to Paris, No. 226 to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> For this *démarche* relating to Memelland cf. 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 804-5; 300 *ibid.*, col. 24; and No. 722 below, note 37.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 651, p. 733.

Powers should notify the Lithuanian Government that unless effective steps have been taken to ensure the constitution of a Directorate possessing the confidence of the Landtag before the end of April the 3 signatories will bring the matter before the Council of the League at its meeting in May.

Please inform the Government to which you are accredited of these views without delay and endeavour to obtain their concurrence. It is in my opinion of particular psychological importance that we should be able to present a united front on this comparatively minor though important question before the conference at Stresa.

Repeated to Riga, Berlin, Moscow.

## No. 672

### *Note on the present state of the German Air Force*

[C 1866/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 30, 1935*

#### *Addendum to Foreign Office memorandum of February 28, 1935<sup>1</sup>*

Herr Hitler has now stated (in the Berlin conversations) that the German Air Force has attained parity with the British Air Force; he quoted figures giving his estimate of British and French air force strengths. In view of his statement, the figures of German air strength given in this memorandum are now shown to be an under-estimation.

The figures given by Herr Hitler for the Air Forces of Great Britain and France apparently included all naval air forces and machines stationed abroad. The figure given for Great Britain was 1,045 first-line machines and a strength including reserves of 2,100. Herr Hitler now therefore states the strength of the German Air Force to be equal to this figure (see pages 24 and 28 of the Revised 'Notes of Conversations').<sup>2</sup>

If these figures are maintained, and it seems probable that the Germans will make a definite statement in the near future (Herr Hitler's statement having now become common knowledge), the picture is still more alarming than had been imagined. It means in effect that Germany has not only an 82% superiority over our home defence squadrons (including auxiliaries), and a 51% superiority over all our first-line air forces (including the naval air arm) stationed at home, but also that she has already attained parity with metropolitan France in the first line and is verging on parity with metropolitan France in the figure for first line plus reserves (see new section of Annex III<sup>3</sup> below). In view of the roughness of our estimates of this latter figure, she may indeed already have done so.

The German bases of comparison are, as is mentioned, different from our own and we know that they include, in the parity which they demand, the

<sup>1</sup> This Addendum to No. 516 was compiled by Mr. Creswell to bring the information in the earlier memorandum up to date 'in view of the Berlin conversations'.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 651, pp. 735 and 739.

<sup>3</sup> The reference was to Annex III to No. 516.

French air forces stationed in Northern Africa. It is submitted, however, that the picture of metropolitan forces is that which we should bear in mind in order to gain the true comparison of strength.

#### COMPARISON

Between the present estimated strengths of the home Air Forces of Germany, Great Britain and France.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Stationed in Great Britain</i>	<i>Metropolitan France</i>
March 1935	A. 1,045 B. 2,100	580 <sup>4</sup> (+110) 1,930	1,000 2,400 <sup>5</sup>

A. = First line strength.

B. = Total service types, including reserves.

<sup>4</sup> *Note in original:* 'The United Kingdom also possessed some 950-1,000 aircraft (including reserves) stationed abroad and in the naval air arm. Naval air arm machines (first line) stationed at home total 110.'

<sup>5</sup> *Note in original:* 'This is at present a very rough estimation.'

#### No. 673

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 1)*

*No. 139 [C 2726/55/18]*

MOSCOW, March 30, 1935

His Majesty's Ambassador at Moscow presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit to him the record of conversations between Mr. Eden and H.M. Ambassador and Mr. Litvinov, on March 28 and 29.

#### ENCLOSURE I IN No. 673

*Record of an Anglo-Soviet Conversation held at the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, Moscow, on March 28, 1935, at 3 p.m.*

Present:

#### *United Kingdom*

Mr. Eden, Lord Privy Seal.

Lord Chilston, His Majesty's Ambassador, Moscow.

Mr. Strang, Foreign Office.

#### *Soviet Union*

Mr. Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Maiski, Soviet Ambassador in London.

Mr. Eden said that he proposed first to give to Mr. Litvinov, for his confidential information, an account of the recent conversations in Berlin.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See No. 651.

Sir John Simon had given some account of them to the French, Italian and Belgian representatives before he left Berlin.

Mr. Litvinov said that he had also had some account from the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, who had had some information from Baron von Neurath.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Eden said that the conversations had been confined to the subjects enumerated in the London communiqué. They had occupied seven hours a day for two days. It was not true, as certain newspapers had said, that Herr Hitler had lectured the British Ministers. He had been clear and frank but courteous, and the British Ministers had done their share of the talking. There had been of course no attempt to reach an agreement, if only because agreement must be general. There had been no disposition on the part of the Chancellor to induce His Majesty's Government to depart from this attitude.

### *Eastern Pact*

The British Ministers had pressed the Chancellor on this subject, reminding him of the support His Majesty's Government had given to the pact in July 1934, and intimating that they had not changed their views as they were more than ever convinced that some security arrangement for Eastern Europe was necessary.

The Chancellor had then defined his own attitude. He was ready to enter into a non-aggression pact with all his neighbours, with one exception. In answer to a question, he had stated that he was willing that such a pact should be multilateral. It was not expressly stated that he was ready to include Russia in such a pact but the British Ministers came away with the impression that Russia would be included. The one exception was Lithuania. The Chancellor was unwilling to make any non-aggression arrangement with Lithuania so long as the present situation at Memel continued.

In reply to a question whether he was willing, in principle, to make such an arrangement provided that the Memel situation was regularised, he replied in the affirmative.

The Chancellor was also ready to enter into a mutual pact of consultation.

As regards mutual assistance, the Chancellor was definitely not forthcoming. The British Ministers had urged him to accept the whole scheme as it stood. The Chancellor, however, while reaffirming his willingness to abide by the mutual assistance scheme laid down in the Locarno Treaty, maintained that the position with regard to the East was not the same.

Why should Germany have to go to war in the East over some quarrel which did not concern her? Germany might wish to remain neutral and, in this event, there was no reason why the German people should march. The Chancellor had been quite firm on this point and the British Ministers had the impression that he was not to be moved from this position. The Chancellor had, however, added that he would be quite prepared to subscribe to a multilateral undertaking not to give assistance to an aggressor.

<sup>2</sup> See *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 565.



The British Ministers had then raised another point. What would the Chancellor's attitude be to a proposal for a multilateral non-aggression pact within the framework of which some parties could, if they wished, undertake engagements of mutual assistance? The Chancellor objected to this on the ground that it would establish different relationships between groups of parties to the same agreement and that the mutual assistance arrangements would really be disguised alliances. Germany would rather take on France or Poland single-handed than be helped by other parties to the pact.

It was then suggested to the Chancellor that at least he might send a reply to the latest French note. At this point Baron von Neurath showed the British Ministers a note on the German attitude to the Eastern pact which would, he said, form a basis of a reply shortly to be sent to the French Government.

Mr. Eden emphasised to Mr. Litvinov that the British Ministers had not recommended any particular form of pact to the Chancellor. They themselves took the view that the pact as originally contemplated might well be accepted and did not wish to make a case for any other alternative.

#### *Central European Pact*

On this the Chancellor had not been so negative. The German Government did not think the proposed arrangement necessary, but, if those who were interested in it could produce some concrete scheme, the German Government would see if they could come into it.

The chief difficulty the Chancellor put forward was that of defining 'non-interference'. He said that Germany had not mobilised divisions as other countries had done, nor had German Ministers made statements, like those in the House of Commons, on the subject of Austria. It was pointed out to the Chancellor that the German Government usually objected to having schemes presented to them ready made. The Chancellor, however, replied that the present case was different as Austria was not a vital matter for Germany. He did not want the annexation of Austria or the 'Anschluss'. It would only add to his own economic difficulties to include Austrian territory with that of Germany. The Austrian problem was not a real problem at all but an artificial one. In any event the Chancellor thought that a non-aggression pact was all that was necessary.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether the Chancellor had insisted upon the participation of Great Britain in the Central European Pact.

Mr. Eden replied that the point had not been mentioned.

Mr. Litvinov enquired whether the Chancellor had objected to any provision of mutual assistance among the parties to the Central European Pact.

Mr. Eden said that this point had not been mentioned.

#### *League of Nations*

Mr. Eden said that the British Ministers had explained to the Chancellor that public opinion in England believed in the League of Nations and did

not understand why Germany stood aside. It was clear to them that the Chancellor was not eager to bring Germany back to the League. It was necessary for everything to be settled before Germany returned, because whatever the Chancellor agreed to, that he would stand by. Before Germany returned to Geneva she would require equality in every sphere.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether one of the conditions was the demilitarised zone.

Mr. Eden said this was not so. The demilitarised zone had only been mentioned once and that in connection with Locarno, by which the Chancellor was prepared to abide.

The British Ministers said that, if the only difficulty had been the separation of the Covenant from the Treaty of Versailles, this might perhaps be done.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether the Chancellor had mentioned any other reforms of the League.

Mr. Eden said that he had not. The impression gained by the British Ministers was that Germany required full equality before she would return.

#### *Armaments*

##### *Military*

The Chancellor's attitude on this point did not seem to offer any satisfactory basis for an agreement. He was told that His Majesty's Government still wanted an armaments agreement, but that this seemed hardly probable if Germany's demands were put at a figure which the Western nations could not accept. Hitherto, the idea had been that France, Germany and Italy should have parity of effectives.

In reply to a question as to what was the total figure involved in the German claim for 36 divisions, the Chancellor replied the figure would be at the most 550,000 men including cavalry, infantry and all other arms, and also including the police and one division of 'S.S.' In defence of this figure, Herr Hitler produced a map showing the forces of Germany's neighbours. The French had 34 divisions within easy call and the Czechoslovakians 17 divisions. The Soviet Union 101 divisions.

Mr. Eden said that he had pointed out to the Chancellor that the Soviet Government had plenty of work to do at home and plenty of territory to administer, and was unlikely to embark on a policy of conquest. The Chancellor, however, took quite a different view and regarded the Soviet Union as a serious menace from the point of view both of world revolution and military aggression. In view of this, he said, Germany must be strong.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether the Chancellor had spoken about expansion in the East.

Mr. Eden said that he had pointed out to the Chancellor that Herr Rosenberg's plans were a cause of apprehension and asked why he allowed these plans. At this both the Chancellor and Baron von Neurath had merely laughed. Mr. Eden had the impression that Herr Rosenberg was not much in favour at present.

### *Naval*

As regards the navy, Herr Hitler had asked for 35% of the British fleet, which he thought would give him parity with France. He had made some mistake here because the tonnage of the French naval forces is a little more than 50% that of the British forces. The British Ministers said that this figure was impossible from their point of view, and offered no hope of agreement. One of the reasons given by the Chancellor for his demand was the necessity to defend the Baltic coast of Germany and to maintain communications with East Prussia which was now almost an overseas colony. The Chancellor had seemed somewhat depressed at the reply. The British Ministers suggested that it might be better to arrange for programmes of construction rather than for ratios of naval strength.

### *Air Force*

In the air the Chancellor demanded parity with Great Britain and France. He wished Great Britain to build up to the present air strength of France.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether Mr. Eden knew what air forces Germany now possessed.

Mr. Eden said he had the impression that Germany had reached parity with Great Britain. The Chancellor had entered one *caveat*: while he would be satisfied with parity at present, his future attitude would depend upon the size of the Russian air force.

### *Air Pact*

This point had been taken last. The Chancellor was keenly in favour of the air pact and wished to conclude it at once. His Majesty's Government did not contemplate the inclusion of figures of air strengths in the air pact. On the other hand, the air pact could hardly come into force unless there was some limitation of air strengths and the air pact was therefore in some way wrapped up in the general settlement. Herr Hitler had been disappointed at this reply.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether Germany was prepared to give a guarantee to Italy, and, if so, why she objected to give mutual assistance in the East.

Mr. Eden replied that he was not sure what Germany's views were as regards guarantees to Italy, but the Chancellor drew a distinction between the West and the East in that relations were clearer in the West and Governments knew more about each other.

The British Ministers could say no more than that they would report what the Chancellor had said about the air pact. The Chancellor had also declared his willingness to abolish bombing by international agreement.

### *[General]*<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Litvinov asked whether he had said anything about the question of heavy war material.

<sup>3</sup> This sub-heading was not in the original typescript record of this conversation but is in the Confidential Print copy.

Mr. Eden said that Germany was ready to abolish any weapon which other countries abolished. Germany, however, would not agree to refrain from constructing any weapons while other countries continued to possess such weapons. They would construct and then, if necessary, destroy, provided other countries did the same.

At the end of the conversations, the British Ministers had told the Chancellor that the conversations had indicated that no great progress towards a general settlement had been made.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether the colonies had been mentioned.

Mr. Eden said that there had been no argument on this point but that he had the impression that one of the conditions of Germany's return to Geneva would be the possession of colonies.

Mr. Eden added that in the course of conversations the British Ministers had made it clear that they had definite moral obligations to work in collaboration with France and other countries who were members of the League. Mr. Eden had made a point of informing Baron von Neurath that he would give Mr. Litvinov an account of what had passed at Berlin.

Mr. Litvinov said that the *Daily Telegraph* had a story that the Chancellor had demanded the abolition of the Polish Corridor and the union to Germany of both Austria and part of the territory of Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Eden said there was no truth in this. The Chancellor, among other things, said that he had no intention of interfering with the territorial clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether Memel had been mentioned.

Mr. Eden said that the result of the Kovno trial had been announced to the Chancellor during the conversations, and that Memel had been mentioned in connection with the Chancellor's refusal to make a non-aggression pact with Lithuania. The Chancellor had also said that he did not think it worth making war for the sake of 100,000 Germans in Memel.

Mr. Litvinov asked what were Mr. Eden's conclusions from the conversations.

Mr. Eden said the point really was what ought to be done next and this point was no doubt now being considered in London. He had not been in touch with his Government and did not know their views. For his own part, speaking personally, he thought that those Governments which believed in the collective system would probably have to hold even more strongly to it than before. The point would no doubt be considered at Stresa as it was now being considered between himself and Mr. Litvinov.

What were Mr. Litvinov's views?

Mr. Litvinov asked what were the grounds for the Chancellor's fear of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Eden said that he apparently feared both the military strength of the Soviet Union and her intentions to promote world revolution. The Chancellor regarded Germany as a barrier against this double danger. The Chancellor had asked what the British Ministers thought the Soviet army should amount to. In reply they had drawn attention to the table in the United

Kingdom Draft Convention, where the Soviet Union is given 500,000 men as compared with 200,000 men for France, Italy and Germany.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether there had been any talk of Japan.

Mr. Eden replied that the Far East had not been mentioned. When he had been in Berlin in 1934 it was France the Chancellor had in mind. Now it was the Soviet Union.

[*Relations with Germany*]<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Litvinov then gave the following account of the development of relations between Germany and the Soviet Union.

For many years relations had been excellent. After the Treaty of Rapallo<sup>4</sup> (which was not an alliance and which contained no secret clauses) relations with both the Government and the Reichswehr had been good. These good relations had continued until just before Hitler came to power. Just before that Herr von Papen had proposed to the French Government a secret agreement aimed at the Soviet Union. This was followed by the Hugenberg memorandum<sup>5</sup> at the London Economic Conference and the programme of aggression in *Mein Kampf*. The original German plan was to attack France and then to attack in the East. Since then German plans had changed. The plan now apparently was to leave France alone, but to attack in the East only. Herr von Neurath had assured the Soviet Government that nothing had changed in the attitude of Germany towards the Soviet Union and that what Hitler and Rosenberg might have said was of purely historic interest. The Soviet Government were not satisfied with this explanation. If Hitler's and Rosenberg's books continued to be a basis of education in Germany, this could only mean that Germany took these plans seriously. Words were not enough. The Soviet Government wanted deeds.

It was in order to test these German expressions of goodwill that Mr. Litvinov had proposed to Germany early in 1934 the conclusion of a Baltic pact which would include a reciprocal guarantee by Germany and the Soviet Union of the integrity of the Baltic States.<sup>6</sup> This pact would be open to the accession of other Powers. Although the German Ambassador of the day, Herr Nadolny, had been in favour of this pact, the German Government had refused it without giving any substantial reason.<sup>7</sup>

Lord Chilston asked what had been Poland's attitude in this matter.

Mr. Litvinov replied that he had made a somewhat similar proposal to Poland namely, a joint declaration of common interest in the maintenance

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 1, note 8.

<sup>5</sup> Herr Hugenberg, Reich Minister of Economics, Food, and Agriculture and a leading member of the German delegation to the World Economic Conference, presented on June 16, 1933, to Mr. Colijn, chairman of the Economic Committee, a memorandum which included a statement on the advantages which would follow Germany's re-acquisition of colonies; for the text, see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. i, No. 312.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. ii, No. 362 (March 28, 1934).

<sup>7</sup> The following sentence was added here on the typescript by Mr. Eden: 'N.B. Herr Nadolny was recalled soon after this and has not, I believe, been re-employed since. A.E.' Cf. No. 199, note 5.

of the independence of the Baltic States.<sup>8</sup> M. Beck had accepted the idea of such a declaration, but, immediately after the conclusion of the Polish-German agreement, the Polish Ambassador in Moscow had informed Mr. Litvinov that the Polish Government could not enter into such a declaration.

Germany's refusal of the Baltic Pact had increased apprehensions in the Soviet Union and in France also. There had then been an initiative on the French side for the conclusion of an Eastern Pact. M. Paul-Boncour had spoken to Mr. Litvinov about this when the latter was on his way to Washington. M. Daladier had made a proposal to the same effect.

Mr. Litvinov had replied to the French Government that he was prepared to come into a collective pact provided it included the neighbours of Germany, including among others Belgium. The French Government had informed him that the Belgians were not prepared to enter into such a pact.

The Soviet Government had then proposed that Germany should also be included. The French then suggested that France should not enter the pact as a principal party, but should join with the Soviet Union in a pact of mutual guarantee within the framework of the general scheme. M. Barthou repeated this proposal when he took office. The Soviet Government did not like this idea because it would exclude the Baltic States from the French guarantee. The French Government, however, were unwilling to give any guarantee to the Baltic States. Mr. Litvinov insisted, but in the meantime M. Barthou was assassinated and no further progress was made on this point.

Mr. Litvinov recalled that Great Britain and Italy had expressed their willingness to support the idea of the Eastern Pact provided that Germany was a party to the mutual guarantee.<sup>9</sup> To this Mr. Litvinov had agreed. Since that time nothing further had happened, except the Geneva arrangement between himself and M. Laval which bound each of them not to take any new step with regard to the Eastern Pact without consulting the other.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Litvinov observed that he did not regard mutual assistance as a real guarantee of defence, but rather as a deterrent: as a last resort the Soviet Union had to rely upon her own forces. But if Germany knew that she would find ranged against her a coalition composed of a number of States she might hesitate to risk her fate.

The Polish attitude, Mr. Litvinov said, was similar to the German. They had no real arguments against the pact after the French had agreed to exclude Czechoslovakia. Recently, at Geneva, M. Beck had slightly modified his attitude and had said that his only objection was that he could not enter the pact unless Germany did so. Mr. Litvinov had pressed him to say whether, if Germany entered the pact, Poland would. To this question M. Beck gave no definite reply.

If, as was apparently the case, Hitler was now saying (through the mouth of Rosenberg and the official German press) that he was not interested in the West and had his eye only upon expansion in the East, this could only be because he thought this policy would be acceptable to Great Britain and

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, *op. cit.*, Nos. 169 and 187.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Volume VI, Nos. 496 and 501.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. No. 253, note 4.

other Powers. He was building his policy upon the assumption of continued antagonism between Great Britain and the Soviet Union. He was making the same mistake as Japan had made in thinking that hostility to communism would make any attack upon the Soviet Union acceptable to the rest of the world. He did not think that Hitler was sincere in disclaiming interest in the West, but even if he was, he obviously considered that hatred of the Soviet Union in the world at large was so great as to excuse any adventure on his part.

Hitler, however, was not the only man in Germany. The Reichswehr were much less hostile to the Eastern Pact, and were always ready to make a bargain with the Soviet Union. Mr. Litvinov had evidence of this from secret sources. The plan of the Reichswehr was always to dispose of France first, rather than to waste valuable time and energy on Russia. What was absolutely certain was that Germany intended to attack somewhere. Hitler's assurances were not to be believed, not even when he said that he had resigned Alsace-Lorraine. Germany was bent first upon revenge and then upon domination.

Lord Chilston asked, when Mr. Litvinov said he wanted mutual assistance, against whom did he want it?

Mr. Litvinov said that it was certainly against Germany, possibly in combination with Poland. Germany was counting upon possible Soviet complications in the Far East, but the Soviet Government did not expect to have any conflict in the Far East in the near future. The desire for good relations between Japan and the Soviet Union was gaining ground in Japan, even in the army.

At this point, Mr. Eden congratulated Mr. Litvinov on the settlement of the difficulties over the Chinese Eastern Railway.<sup>11</sup>

Mr. Litvinov said that the sale of the railway had removed one cause of friction. If Japan now wished to provoke the Soviet Union, they must enter Soviet territory in order to do so. Japan could not make very much use of Manchuria as a colony for climatic reasons, and she was coming to think that it was more profitable to buy timber and oil from the Russians and to develop her fisheries than to make war upon her. Japan had not intended to stop short at Manchuria, but had had designs upon the Maritime Province and on China. She had miscalculated, by counting too much upon the hostility of the rest of the world towards the Soviet Union. She had now drawn the necessary conclusion, and it was hoped that Germany also would soon begin to draw conclusions from things as they were and not from the figments of Hitler's imagination.

The Soviet Government were concerned not merely for their own frontiers, but for peace in Europe. They had enough work to do at home to keep them busy for half a century and it would take them decades to catch up with the rest of the world in technical developments and the standard of life. They did not want to be disturbed and they believed that a war in Europe, even if they were not directly involved, would eventually drag them in. It was for

<sup>11</sup> Cf. No. 669, note 3.

this reason that they strongly supported the idea of collective security, and gave their approval to the Central European Pact as well as the Eastern Pact. They also supported Turkey's desire for a pact in the South-East. They sincerely wished for the participation of Germany, and especially of Poland, in the Eastern Pact. But if Germany refused, the problem of what to do next would present itself.

Lord Chilton said that that was what everybody wanted to know.

Mr. Litvinov doubted whether it would be much use arguing any further with Germany.

Mr. Eden said that it was difficult to draw any hopeful conclusion from Germany's reply about the Eastern Pact.<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Litvinov observed that Germany was still trying to separate the other Powers one from another. There was perhaps, however, some chance of persuading Poland to join the pact. This was where British policy might play a big part, because Poland now attached great importance to what was said in London, particularly since she had quarrelled with France. There was a strong public opinion in Poland hostile to the policy of Marshal Pilsudski and M. Beck. It was not certain that M. Beck would be able to go on ignoring Polish public opinion, more particularly since the German declaration of the 16th March<sup>13</sup> had caused considerable alarm in Poland. It might be worth while trying to detach Poland from her present line, and draw her towards the Eastern Pact. If this did not succeed, the only alternative would be to conclude a pact without Germany and Poland, but a pact of this kind would lose 50% of its value, and it was hard to see any other alternative. Something ought to be done to show Germany that the world did not pivot around Berlin. There might be some point in concluding both an air pact and an Eastern Pact without Germany: the first step would be a series of regional security pacts; the second step would be to link up these various pacts.

Mr. Eden asked whether the Baltic States would come into a reduced Eastern Pact.

Mr. Litvinov said he was not sure. They might do so if France was prepared to extend her guarantee to the Baltic States, but on this point he had had no definite reply from Paris. In any event, such a pact as he contemplated ought to have some clause providing for immediate assistance, such as was contemplated in the air pact.

Mr. Eden said he thought it would be easier to decide when a case arose under the air pact than in other more general pacts.

Mr. Litvinov said he was not sure about this. It would be remembered that one of the earlier incidents of the Great War was the allegation that French aeroplanes had attacked Nuremberg, a report which was apparently without foundation. Then again both the Soviet and Japanese Governments had alleged that their respective territories had been violated by the air forces of the other. There was no agreement as to the true facts of the case.

In general, however, he repeated that much would depend upon the attitude of Great Britain. What was Mr. Eden's views?

<sup>12</sup> Cf. No. 651, pp. 710-17.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. No. 570.



Mr. Eden said that, speaking personally and without authority, he thought that, in view of Germany's attitude, the collective system would become more important than ever, and that their faith in it should be reaffirmed in some way by those forming part of it. He did not think Germany would be happy to be in isolation. He thought that if it was clear to Germany that the alternatives were either for her to come into the collective system or for the world to be ranged against her, she would be unable to stand out very long. In 1934 he had thought there had been a basis for a general settlement with Germany, and that the French were unwise to refuse the German offer. Now, however, he found it very hard to see what basis there was. Even apart from Germany's attitude towards the League of Nations, it was not easy to see any basis for an arms and security agreement.

Mr. Litvinov wondered whether His Majesty's Government could possibly do more for security than was contained in the Covenant and Locarno. Was there any possibility of a British guarantee for the independence of the Baltic States?

Mr. Eden said that, in his view, there was not.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether Mr. Eden thought the integrity of the Baltic States was a British interest.

Mr. Eden said it would be extremely short-sighted of anyone to think it wise to have war in the East to avoid war in the West. The interest of His Majesty's Government in the Baltic States however was not like their interest in Belgium and the Low Countries, though they were of course interested from the point of view of general security in Europe.

Mr. Litvinov wondered whether a general European pact of mutual assistance was possible, under which the obligations of Article 16 of the Covenant would become automatic.

Mr. Eden said he thought this would be too much to ask His Majesty's Government. It was certainly against their interest to see the situation in Eastern Europe upset, but this was a long way from expecting them to give an immediate and automatic guarantee. Was not what Mr. Litvinov had in mind already in the Covenant itself?

Mr. Litvinov explained that action under Article 16 was optional. What he wanted was something compulsory. He thought that even His Majesty's Government might come to want something of this kind some day. He wanted to make it clear, however, that he was not now making a definite proposal, but merely discussing possible courses. He was not in fact sure that his own Government would be prepared to enter such a general European pact as he had in mind.

Mr. Eden said that the British Ministers had gone to Berlin to find out whether Germany was likely to play her part in European security. If not, and it rather looked as though this was the case, a good deal of hard thinking would be necessary.

Mr. Litvinov enquired whether there was any indication of a possible change of view on the part of Poland.

Mr. Eden said that the Polish Ambassador in London had discussed the Eastern Pact with him. Poland was obviously apprehensive for historical

reasons of her two powerful neighbours, and preferred her present policy of equilibrium. It would be interesting to see what M. Beck had to say. He knew from a message he had received when passing through Warsaw that M. Beck was very anxious to know what had taken place in Berlin.<sup>14</sup> The European situation as now known was without doubt the problem which had to be discussed at Stresa. Mr. Eden had been interested to notice, when in Paris the previous week, that the Italians were more perturbed about the situation than even the French.

Mr. Litvinov thought that it would be difficult to find out anything from Marshal Pilsudski or M. Beck. His reason for being so anxious to include both Germany and Poland in the pact was that he was afraid Germany might lead Poland into adventures. If Poland attacked the Soviet Union, Germany would join in for the sake of acquiring the Corridor and Silesia.

Lord Chilston wondered whether any Polish attack on Russia was credible.

Mr. Litvinov thought that Poland might do so if she had the promise of assistance from Germany, and some expectation of neutrality on the part of the other Great Powers.

Mr. Eden said he could not conceive that Poland would attack the Soviet Union. He understood it to be Mr. Litvinov's view that Germany's first attack might be on the Baltic States and not upon the Soviet Union.

Mr. Litvinov assented.

#### *The Far East*

Mr. Eden said that the general line of British policy in the Far East was that mutual relations should be as good as possible as amongst other reasons freedom from anxiety in the Far East made a greater possibility of British influence being usefully exercised in Europe. There was no idea in the minds of His Majesty's Government of any bilateral non-aggression agreement or the establishment of any special relations with any single Power in the Far East. There was no idea for example, of such an agreement between Great Britain and Japan.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether this was the view of the Government or merely of public opinion.

Mr. Eden said it was the policy of the Government. There was no idea whatever of doing a deal with Japan at the expense of either China or of the Soviet Union. What His Majesty's Government wished for was good relations everywhere, among other things a *détente* between China and Japan. They had taken this line recently in connection with the loan proposal recently mooted by China in her currency difficulties. His Majesty's Government took the view that such help as might be given had to be given jointly and it was for this reason that they had consulted both the U.S.A. and Japan. They had informed the Chinese Government that they were anxious to help in any practical measure of assistance if the latter had a suitable joint scheme to suggest.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See No. 653.

<sup>15</sup> Documents relating to His Majesty's Government's policy towards Far Eastern questions at this time will be printed in a subsequent volume in this Series.

He also wished to take this opportunity of informing Mr. Litvinov that if at any time Mr. Litvinov wished for information upon anything we were doing in the Far East, or upon anything that he thought we were doing, he hoped he would address himself to His Majesty's Government either through Lord Chilston or Mr. Maiski. His Majesty's Government would be glad to give him information. His Majesty's Government wished that there should be no cloud in the relations between the two countries on grounds of mere misunderstanding.

Mr. Litvinov said that he wished to emphasise that the Soviet Government had no policy of expansion either political or economic; they did not regard foreign trade in the same light as other countries. Their present object was to *reduce* their exports. Their interest in the Far East was peace on their own frontiers. It was not to their interest that Japan should extend into China. Japan might thereby strengthen herself and attack the Soviet Union.

Mr. Eden said that neither did His Majesty's Government want this to happen.

Mr. Litvinov said finally that he was doubtful whether anything could be done to restrain Japan by Governments acting independently. Japan had the same mentality as Germany and was bent on expansion. She was limited in her action by economic difficulties, but Japan's aspirations remained as described in the Tanaka memorandum<sup>16</sup> and she had designs on a good part of Asia including India. Japan had a kind of Monroe doctrine of 'Asia for Japan'. He did not think that the yellow peril was an unfounded apprehension. The problem of the Far East would have to be solved by collective action. He did not know whether we had had any discussion on this point with the United States. The best solution would be a coalition of Pacific Powers. He was not of course making any proposal, but only throwing out ideas. It was not encouraging that the United States of America were moving towards isolation again. Perhaps this was true of Great Britain also.

Mr. Eden doubted whether it was really true of Great Britain. The people of Great Britain certainly had hankerings after isolation, but it was clear that isolation was not possible.

Mr. Litvinov said that he could quite understand this. There were isolationists in Moscow also who urged that the Soviet Union had resources enough and man-power enough to be able to stand alone without contracting engagements with the rest of the world.

It was agreed that the Press should be told that Mr. Eden had given an account of the Berlin conversations and that this had been followed by an

<sup>16</sup> This memorandum of 1929 purported to be a memorial to the Japanese Emperor expressing the views of Baron Tanaka, at that time Japanese Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, on Japan's foreign policy; cf. M. Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny* (London, 1958), p. 46.

exchange of views upon the general situation. The discussions would be continued the following day.

The meeting then adjourned.<sup>17</sup>

ENCLOSURE 2 IN No. 673

*Record of an Anglo-Soviet Conversation held at the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, Moscow, on March 29 at 11.30 a.m.*<sup>18</sup>

*London Communiqué*<sup>19</sup>

Mr. Litvinov opened the conversation by asking whether there was any truth in a press report that Herr Hitler had handed Sir John Simon a memorandum on German policy.

Mr. Eden said that all Sir John Simon had received was a short statement of the German views on the Eastern pact.<sup>20</sup> This statement would form a basis of the reply shortly to be sent to the French Government, and corresponded with the account given to Mr. Litvinov on the previous day.

Mr. Litvinov also enquired whether Herr Hitler had made any complaint about the French appeal to the Council of the League.

Mr. Eden said this subject had not been mentioned at all at Berlin.

Mr. Litvinov also asked whether the reference in Mr. Eden's speech<sup>21</sup> at the dinner on the previous evening to personal contacts had any reference to future meetings with German representatives.

Mr. Eden said that the reference was to the present and not to the future. For the moment it was impossible to look further ahead than Stresa and Geneva.

Mr. Litvinov said that he would like, if possible, to be clear on one point. Mr. Eden had suggested that it would be necessary to hold more closely than ever to the collective system. Supposing the German Government were to continue to refuse to take part in any security pact, and the other parties

<sup>17</sup> A telegraphic report of this meeting was sent to the Foreign Office by Mr. Eden in Moscow telegram No. 46 of 11.59 p.m. of March 28 (received at 9.30 a.m. on March 29). It included the following paragraph:—

'We were interested to note that Monsieur Litvinov for the first time at least since I have known him, was clearly in doubt as to what to do next in Eastern Europe. If Poland would come into Eastern pact it might still be possible to make that effective but if not he was troubled as to what attitude to take. He was however determined upon one conclusion, that the Great Powers of Europe must now more than ever stand firmly by collective peace system. If this were done and if Germany were made to appreciate that she could not divide the forces preserving peace then she might be compelled to modify her policy as Japan had been owing to Russia's growing strength in the Far East. He was happy to report that Soviet Government's relations with Japan were now much improved but this was only because Russia had been wise enough to settle dangerously contentious problems like Chinese Eastern Railway while effectively improving defences of her own frontiers. Mentality of Japan and mentality of modern Germany were alike.'

<sup>18</sup> The same British and Soviet representatives were present as at the first meeting on March 28 (enclosure 1 in No. 673).

<sup>19</sup> Of February 3, 1935; see No. 400, note 4 and Annex.

<sup>20</sup> See Annex to the Third Meeting in No. 651, p. 739.

<sup>21</sup> See *The Times*, March 29, p. 16.

went on alone to conclude such security agreements as they could, what would be the attitude of Great Britain?

Mr. Eden said he would prefer to consider this question before giving a definite reply. Perhaps the point might be further discussed at Geneva in April. His own personal impression however was that there was not likely to be any objection to such a course as Mr. Litvinov had in mind, provided first, that the security agreements in question were under the auspices of the League, and secondly, that they were open to accession by other States.

Mr. Litvinov wondered whether Mr. Eden could perhaps get an expression of view from London before he left Moscow. His question also of course referred to the Central European pact.

Lord Chilston thought that it was hardly possible for His Majesty's Government to make any definite statement for the moment. The present conversations were purely exploratory in character.

Mr. Eden asked Mr. Litvinov what were his own ideas about future procedure? Was it his intention to try to conclude a pact without Germany or Poland?

Mr. Litvinov replied that he was not quite sure about this. The Soviet Government might perhaps want to do so.

Mr. Eden asked whether there were any other views which Mr. Litvinov wished to express upon the matters dealt with at Berlin. If, for example, Germany maintained that she must enjoy full equality before she would return to the League, would he say that her terms ought to be granted, or that it would be wrong to offer Germany a bribe for this purpose?

Mr. Litvinov said that he had not thought about this point. Unless Germany participated in the collective security arrangements her return to the League would not be of any value. The League at present did not provide any security at all. If Paraguay could flout the League, what could other States not do? He was convinced that unless security was strengthened either by amending the Covenant (which was difficult) or by the conclusion of regional security pacts, the League could hardly continue to exist.

Mr. Eden doubted whether an analogy from South America was necessarily applicable to Europe.

Mr. Litvinov said that the trouble was that the League required unanimity and that States with no real interest could influence or block decisions.

Mr. Eden then asked whether Mr. Litvinov thought that the German attitude towards effectives and heavy war material made it difficult to hope for an armaments agreement.

Mr. Litvinov said that the Soviet Union was not a party to the Treaty of Versailles, and was not concerned in the purely juridical aspect of Germany's action. He thought however that all States ought to enjoy equality. He was convinced, however, that Germany's policy was based on aggression. The question was whether, knowing this, it was right to help her to get armaments. If it was possible to prevent her arming herself, the attempt ought to be made in self-defence. The question was, how this was to be done. He agreed that the German demands left little prospect of an agreement. The Soviet Government had declared their own level of armaments. This level

did not represent a maximum. If they failed to obtain security they would have to increase their arms, and they could increase them on a larger scale than Germany. It might indeed be wiser to legalise German armaments, but it was fair to ask oneself why indeed this should be done.

Mr. Eden said that a year ago Germany might have paid a price for legalisation. She would not now pay any price.

Mr. Litvinov observed that the real point of difference in the attitude of His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government was that the former did not believe in the aggressiveness of German policy.

Mr. Eden thought it would be fairer to say that His Majesty's Government were not so convinced of it as were the Soviet Government. He did not know what view His Majesty's Government took of the Berlin conversations, but they had hitherto wished not to believe badly of Germany's intentions. It was significant that Sir John Simon in a statement in the House of Commons on the previous day<sup>22</sup> had referred to 'the considerable divergences of view' revealed by the Berlin conversations.

Mr. Litvinov said that he could only conclude that Germany refused to enter the collective system because she wished to keep her hands free. The only country at all likely to attack Germany was Poland and mutual assistance would give Germany protection against Poland. There was some reason to believe that some time ago Poland had proposed to France a preventive war against Germany. France had declined and this had been the beginning of Poland's dissatisfaction with France. There was no doubt that Poland had designs on East Prussia although this did not of course mean that she would attack Germany to-morrow.

Mr. Maiski recalled that Mr. Molotov, in a public speech two months ago,<sup>23</sup> had asked Herr Hitler whether he still had designs on Russian territory. There had so far been no reply to this question.

Mr. Litvinov enquired whether His Majesty's Government proposed to proceed with the conclusion of an air pact without Germany.

Mr. Eden said that Germany herself was anxious to conclude an air pact. The British Ministers had given Herr Hitler no encouragement to think that an air pact could be concluded apart from the general settlement.

Mr. Litvinov said that his own interpretation of the London communiqué was that the air pact would be concluded whether Germany came in to the general settlement or not.

Mr. Eden said it was not so. It had been clearly understood by both sides that if Germany refused a general settlement a new situation would arise which would have to be examined.

#### *Anglo-Russian questions: Trade*

Mr. Eden said he had had a talk the previous evening with M. Rosengolz, Commissar for Foreign Trade. He had also consulted Colonel Colville<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 2083-4.

<sup>23</sup> See Degras, *Soviet Documents*, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>24</sup> Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade.

before leaving London. He believed that the temporary commercial agreement<sup>25</sup> was working reasonably well, and that His Majesty's Government had no complaint to make. Great Britain was anxious to sell manufactured goods if she could.

Lord Chilston added 'and more if possible than at present'.

Mr. Eden enquired whether there was any idea of concluding a permanent commercial agreement.

Mr. Litvinov answered: 'Why not?'

Mr. Eden recalled that His Majesty's Government were unable to conclude such an agreement in the absence of a debt settlement.

Lord Chilston said that he had understood that the Soviet Government were anxious to conclude a permanent agreement.

Mr. Litvinov said that the Soviet Government were quite happy so far.

### *Propaganda*

Mr. Eden said there was one other question which Sir Robert Vansittart had mentioned to Mr. Maiski some time previously, namely propaganda. He could not say that he thought that communist propaganda was going to upset the British Empire, nor did he take it very tragically. However, if the two countries were now to enter upon an era of friendliness and greater frankness, this could not be reconciled with the continuance of propaganda. If the Soviet Government considered the British Empire to be an element contributing to world peace, they should have no reason to desire to upset it. He did not however wish to go into any details.

Mr. Litvinov said he did not know what was meant by propaganda. If it was a matter of press attacks, the balance was not in favour of Great Britain.

Lord Chilston observed that subversive propaganda was going on in various parts of the British Empire.

Mr. Litvinov said such propaganda was going on in all countries. The point was, who was conducting it. Dissatisfaction always created propaganda against a government. The Soviet Government were not conducting propaganda in British territory either directly or indirectly. They stood loyally by the pledge which they had given. Mr. Litvinov thought it would be wiser not to mention this question of propaganda in any communication to the press after the meeting as it would probably cause trouble in the Soviet press.

Mr. Eden said that otherwise, apart from this, he did not think that there was any real differences [*sic*] between the two Governments.

### *Trade (continued)*

Mr. Litvinov said there seemed to be some dissatisfaction with the amount of trade carried on between Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

Mr. Maiski observed that he had heard from British manufacturers that they would like more orders than those at present received. The Soviet Union was trading on the basis of its current resources and these were comparatively limited in amount.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. No. 484, note 3.

Mr. Litvinov added that trade would be increased if there were better conditions. The Soviet Government had been in negotiation with the German Government in respect of a credit of 200 million marks.<sup>26</sup> Germany was pressing for this transaction which was now nearing completion. The Soviet Government would have preferred to do this business with other countries with whom their relations were better, but the German terms were more favourable than those of other countries.

Mr. Eden said he understood that if the Soviet Government had in mind the possibility of orders on a larger scale than usual, the authorities in London were prepared to talk about such things as credit.

Mr. Litvinov said the Germans were giving five years credit. If the Soviet Government could get as good terms from Great Britain they could do business there on a larger scale.

Mr. Eden suggested that if the Soviet Government had anything particular in mind they might make proposals.

Mr. Maiski recalled that Mr. Ozerski<sup>27</sup> had already talked to Colonel Colville and Sir Horace Wilson<sup>28</sup> but that so far nothing had happened.

Mr. Litvinov said he was not pressing the point. He had no complaint to make. He felt it necessary however to explain the projected German deal which showed among other things that the Soviet hatred of Hitler did not prevent them doing trade with Germany.

#### *Propaganda (continued)*

Mr. Litvinov said he could not accept the argument that His Majesty's Government had no influence on the press. If there were a newspaper campaign against France and Italy similar to that sometimes conducted against the Soviet Union, the Government would be able to find means of stopping it. So also, he was sure that if members of the House of Commons put questions insulting to France or Italy of the kind frequently put with regard to the Soviet Union, the Government or the Speaker would find means to protect a friendly country.

Mr. Eden reminded Mr. Litvinov that Members of Parliament were free to ask any questions they liked that were in order. The Soviet Government would agree that His Majesty's Ministers did what they could to do justice to the Soviet Government in their answers. The practice of asking such questions was now dying down and was only indulged in by a few people. Speeches and interviews, like the recent interview of Sir Austen Chamberlain to the 'Pravda',<sup>29</sup> carried much more weight than all the questions put by Sir

<sup>26</sup> Cf. No. 670.      <sup>27</sup> Head of the Soviet Trade Delegation in the United Kingdom.

<sup>28</sup> Chief Industrial Adviser to His Majesty's Government.

<sup>29</sup> Sir A. Chamberlain's interview with the London correspondent of *Pravda* was reported in the *Manchester Guardian* of March 27. He was reported as saying that apart from 'the delicate matter of interference in internal affairs . . . there is nothing else which should interfere with the cultivation of the most friendly relations between the Soviet Government and ourselves. Those relations are essential for the preservation of peace.' M. Litvinov had quoted from this statement at a reception for Mr. Eden on March 28; cf. *The Times*, March 29, p. 16.



William Davison.<sup>30</sup> Anglo-Soviet relations had been a party matter in England for a long time, and allowance must be made for that.

As regards the press, the Government itself could hardly be said to have a good press. The views of the Beaverbrook and Rothermere press about Soviet Russia did not represent the foreign policy of the Government. When the 'Daily Express' had used unflattering expressions about the Shah of Persia, His Majesty's Government had had some difficulty in explaining that they were unable to do anything about it. It was a hopeful sign that so many newspapers had sent special correspondents to Moscow upon the present occasion.

Mr. Litvinov said it was not criticism he objected to but insults. They themselves criticised the policy of His Majesty's Government when they thought it necessary.

Mr. Eden observed, with regard to this last remark, that British policy might sometimes appear to the Soviet Government to be hesitant and vacillating, if not weak. This arose from the special character of British institutions and he would beg Mr. Litvinov not to misunderstand it. His Majesty's Government felt entitled to object if their policy, instead of being recognised for what it was, was regarded as being sinister and designed for deception. The Soviet Government might disapprove of British methods but they should not mistrust British sincerity.

Lord Chilston pointed out that the 'Pravda' had recently been unsparing of its criticism of British policy.

Mr. Litvinov did not deny that the Soviet Government had influence over the Soviet press, but in order to persuade them to take a certain line we must come to them with a good case. It was perfectly true that Soviet public opinion was highly suspicious. It was especially sensitive in regard to the proposed pacts. If any government showed signs of being too indulgent towards Germany, the Soviet public jumped easily to unfavourable conclusions.

Mr. Eden said that His Majesty's Government might appear unwise in Soviet eyes but they had of course no intention whatever of 'double-crossing.' He could give that assurance, and Mr. Litvinov should accept it.

Mr. Litvinov said that the Soviet public saw the situation thus. On the one hand there was Germany with obviously aggressive designs. On the other hand there were a number of States trying to check Germany. Great Britain, by failing to support these attempts, appeared to be coming to the aid of Germany. The Soviet public could not be expected to understand the play of internal politics and the public opinion which influenced British policy.

Mr. Eden said that this was a misreading of British psychology. The British public was not anti-German at present. But it would be opposed to any country which showed the intention of breaking the peace. A great many people in England thought that French rigidity had helped Hitler's rise. People in England were neither pro-French nor anti-German. If they were

<sup>30</sup> Member of Parliament for South Kensington. See 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 5-6, 983-4.

finally convinced that Germany intended to break the peace, they would align themselves accordingly.

Mr. Litvinov said that the Soviet Government had thought His Majesty's Government had recently been guilty of an error of tactics. They had failed to be firm enough in implementing the February agreement.

Mr. Eden said he could not agree. He felt sure that if the British Ministers had not visited Berlin, they would have been seriously blamed at home for not persevering with their intentions. The visit had undoubtedly been useful to British public opinion, and in other ways.

Mr. Maiski interjected that it had been useful as a lesson.

Mr. Litvinov asked what could be done to improve Anglo-Soviet relations.

Mr. Eden said that he thought that contacts like the present would certainly contribute to creating a better atmosphere.

Mr. Litvinov said he assumed there were no further points of friction between the two countries.

Mr. Eden replied that he could think of none.

#### *Further procedure*

Mr. Litvinov asked whether the French were going to withdraw their appeal to the Council.

Mr. Eden said he understood that M. Laval had not been very keen about making the appeal but that he had heard nothing of any intention to withdraw.

Mr. Litvinov asked what would be on the agenda at Stresa.

Mr. Eden replied that he thought the results of all the recent visits would be considered with a view of deciding what to do next. The Berlin visit from this point of view had not been unimportant, even though the results might have been negative.

Mr. Maiski asked whether Mr. Eden had any indication of the view taken by His Majesty's Government of the Stresa meeting.

Mr. Eden replied that he had not. His Majesty's Government could not reach any conclusion until after the present series of visits had been concluded, but Sir John Simon's statement in the House of Commons the previous day<sup>31</sup> did not indicate that the prospects were very encouraging.

Mr. Litvinov asked whether there had been any decision to carry on further conversations with Germany on the basis of the information received at Berlin.

Mr. Eden said that certainly nothing of this kind would be done until after the French and Italian Governments had been consulted at Stresa.

Mr. Litvinov said he was pretty sure that His Majesty's Government would have an early visit from Herr von Ribbentrop.

Mr. Maiski thought that only firmness would help the situation.

Mr. Litvinov added that His Majesty's Government had been trying one method. They ought now to try another. The Soviet Government for their part had no Ribbentrops. They did not allow their military, or anybody else, to interfere with foreign affairs.

<sup>31</sup> See 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 2083-4.

Mr. Eden said that in this they showed their wisdom.

It was agreed that the press should be informed that the exchange of information had been continued and that the general state of Anglo-Soviet relations, both commercial and political, had been under consideration. It was hoped that the conversations would lead to a period of better relations and good understanding.

It was intended to issue a communiqué at the close of the visit.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The text of the communiqué, printed in *The Times*, April 1, p. 14, was agreed at a meeting at 5.30 p.m. on Sunday, March 31, attended by the same British and Soviet representatives as at the two previous meetings. See also No. 680 below.

## No. 674

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received March 31, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 70 Telegraphic [C 2692/55/18]*

PARIS, March 31, 1935, 1 a.m.

Your telegram No. 84.<sup>1</sup>

Monsieur Titulescu who has been here for two days and Soviet Ambassador have been assiduous in attendance at the Quai d'Orsay and your telegram arrived as I was asking for interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs in order to try and find out what was going on.

Monsieur Laval could not see me till late this afternoon and when I gave him your message I got the impression of catching a schoolboy who had just banged the door of the store cupboard but had not yet got hold of the jam.

Minister for Foreign Affairs admitted that Little Entente had been pressing him hard about Eastern Pact, in which question, he said, Monsieur Litvinov's position was somewhat different from that of yourself or of Signor Mussolini. But he fully agreed with the rightfulness of your views and I think that your message has come most appropriately and will stop him from committing himself to anything which will limit freedom of action of Stresa Conference.<sup>2</sup>

Repeated to Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 664.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Sargent minuted on April 2: 'I hope we really did get our caveat in in time. I am rather doubtful.'

## No. 675

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 1)*

*No. 67 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2728/55/18]*

PARIS, March 31, 1935

Havas today issues a categorical démenti of report published by Paris correspondent of 'Lokal Anzeiger' to the effect that Monsieur Laval might stay in Berlin on his way to Moscow.

No. 676

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 1, 8.30 p.m.)*  
*No. 143 Telegraphic [C 2731/55/18]*

BERLIN, April 1, 1935, 8.32 p.m.

In view of statements in British and foreign press as to what passed at Berlin conversations, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs take the line in discussing matters with certain foreign correspondents that these conversations were purely of exploratory nature, that there was no bargaining and that the Chancellor merely communicated Germany's desiderata, not her minimum requirements.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wigram minuted this telegram: 'This shows that a little criticism is good. R.F.W. 3/4.'

No. 677

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 2, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 241 Telegraphic [C 2767/55/18]*

ROME, April 1, 1935, 11.40 p.m.

My telegram No. 240.<sup>1</sup>

My French colleague<sup>2</sup> who is by nature optimistic told me today that he was very satisfied with the possibilities of the Stresa meeting. Italian Government were prepared to follow any joint Anglo-French lead. Relations between Italian and French Governments were extremely close, between Italian and Yugoslav Governments much better, indeed good, while friendship between England and France remained unaltered. (He remarked that the French press had with one or two exceptions ceased criticising British policy). Further his news from Russia regarding results of Mr. Eden's visit was excellent. He had learnt from three different sources including the Head of Government here who was now paying special court to Poland that the latter's attitude had recently greatly changed for the better. The General of the Jesuits who in his view, which was confirmed by Signor Mussolini, was extraordinarily well informed had told him that Poland had reverted to her previous friends. Our Polish colleague<sup>3</sup> who for the last few months had held rather aloof and who had recently returned from Warsaw had now become much more genial. He had stated that Poland was experiencing considerable difficulties with Germany such as continuance of strong German propaganda in the Corridor.

My French colleague therefore took for granted that a common front between the three Powers would be established at Stresa not for the purpose

<sup>1</sup> Not printed; cf. No. 691 below, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Le Comte de Chambrun.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. A. Wysocki.

of isolating Germany but in order to preserve peace and the maintenance of the authority of the League of Nations.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

**No. 678**

*Minute by Mr. Sargent*

[C 2656/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 1, 1935*

Events are shaping in such a way that it may well be that a Franco-Russian alliance directed against Germany may be inevitable. But there still are fortunately elements in France who are alive to its ulterior dangers and are therefore still opposed to it. I do not think we ought, therefore, to do anything, either by omission or commission, to weaken the resistance of these elements as long as our policy remains that of advocating the collective system of security as contrasted with that of exclusive military alliances.

The reasons why I dislike a straightforward Franco-Russian military alliance as compared to a multilateral agreement for mutual security, even without Germany and Poland, and even though it only camouflages joint action by Russia and France, are as follows:—

1. British public opinion would view such an alliance with the gravest suspicions. It would re-awaken memories of 1914, when we were dragged into the war not because there was a direct quarrel between France and Germany, but because France was involved through her alliance with Russia. Even though legally it would be possible so to arrange matters that France's commitments under a Franco-Russian alliance would not bring into operation our commitments under Locarno, nevertheless from the psychological point of view I venture to think that the existence of a Franco-Russian alliance will make the British public and British Parliament far more chary of implementing our Locarno obligations than they are at present, when France's foreign policy is supposed to be entirely independent.

2. The argument which Litvinov has used all along in order to bring the French Government up to the scratch is the threat that if France won't give him an alliance he will go and get one from Hitler. I think that the Berlin conversations have revealed the complete emptiness of this threat. No doubt, as Sir George Clerk says in this despatch,<sup>1</sup> Hitler may die and German policy may change. But even supposing this were to happen, is it really necessary to guard against this unlikely eventuality at the present moment and in present circumstances? If it did occur there would surely be time enough for France to intervene to prevent such a Russo-German alliance from materialising?

3. I doubt very much whether the creation of a Franco-Russian military alliance would produce any increased feeling of security in France. The French are intelligent enough to realise that as an aggressive military force

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Sir G. Clerk's despatch No. 493 of March 28; see No. 663.

the Russians, in the best of circumstances, would be of very doubtful value. In this connexion see Lord Chilton's despatch No. 110<sup>2</sup> of March 9th. If they were involved in military difficulties in the Far East they would with the best will in the world probably be unable to assume the offensive at all in the west. On the other hand, if they had no difficulties in the Far East, their interests in the French alliance would rapidly wane, and being complete opportunists it is hardly likely that they would be prepared to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for France merely out of loyalty to their pledged word. It must be fairly obvious to the French themselves that Russia's idea of an alliance with France is that it is France who is to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Russia. Since it is generally recognised that Germany in present circumstances at any rate does not intend to expand in the west but does intend to expand in the east,<sup>3</sup> it follows that it is France who undertakes the real risk of having to intervene to prevent this expansion in the east, whereas Russia undertakes in reality no risk at all of having to intervene to prevent Germany's expansion in the west.

4. There is a real danger that an undisguised Franco-Russian military alliance would bring about a German-Japanese alliance, which would be bound to have immediate and disagreeable reactions on British policy both in Europe and the Far East.

5. If by means of a Franco-Russian alliance we closed to Germany all means of expansion in the east, where she is less likely to come into conflict with British, or indeed any other, interests than elsewhere, we must be prepared for German pressure down the Danube to be increased proportionately. As soon as this fact becomes evident Italy will be clamouring for a Franco-Italian alliance for very much the same reasons as those now used by the Russians. Can France really undertake this further commitment, where once again the chestnuts pulled out of the fire will go to France's ally rather than to France herself? On the other hand, if France has to choose between an alliance with Russia or an alliance with Italy, surely an alliance with the latter would in many ways be more advantageous. In the first place there is a very real danger that Italy, if she feels that she is not being adequately supported, may veer round and rush back into the arms of Germany. Hitler does not suffer from any anti-Fascist complex which would prevent him from welcoming Italy back into the German orbit, and when all is said and done, there are the making[s] of a quite satisfactory German-Italian agreement for partitioning out Central Europe and the Balkans between Germany and Italy. Again, a German penetration down the Danube would be much more likely to be successful than a penetration into Russia, and far more likely, if successful, to be damaging to vital British interests.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> No. 55<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Sir R. Vansittart noted at this point: 'Let us be careful how far we push this affirmation. R.V.'

<sup>4</sup> A marginal note by Sir R. Vansittart here read: 'With all this I agree. We shall have to be very careful at Stresa and thenceforth not to play our hand with so little skill as to impel Italy back in this direction with disastrous results.'

For the above reasons I hope that, for France's sake as well as our own, we will at Stresa do all we can to prevent the conclusion of a direct Franco-Russian military alliance directed against Germany.<sup>5</sup>

O. G. SARGENT

<sup>5</sup> Sir R. Vansittart here commented, on April 1: 'Well, so do I, and so, I think, do we all. But there is only one way of doing it, if Germany remains—as she will—obdurate in making no effective contribution to collective security. And that way is by showing our own solidarity at Stresa and by urging that collective security, under the League and with or without Germany, is the real answer. There is no other way, and we must now face facts and Europe as they are and not as we would wish them in a more reasonable world.' Sir J. Simon added: 'I have read all this, thank you. J.S. Apl. 4.' Lord Stanhope, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, also commented later, on April 12.

No. 679

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 708 [C 2797/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 1, 1935*

Sir,

M. Corbin asked me this afternoon whether I could give M. Laval some indication of the impressions I had formed as the result of the visit to Berlin. I reminded the Ambassador that before leaving Berlin Mr. Eden and I had seen M. François-Poncet and had given him, in company with the Belgian Ambassador and the Italian Chargé d'Affaires, a pretty full account of what had passed between us and the German Chancellor.<sup>1</sup> I understood that M. François-Poncet had made a full report of this to Paris and also to London. This, however, was an account of what had passed rather than of my own reflections upon the Berlin interviews. Mr. Eden would be reaching London, after his visits to other capitals, on Thursday<sup>2</sup> evening, and I was then going to sit down with him and put the effect of the whole tour together. After that it might be possible to give M. Laval some preparatory information in view of the Stresa meeting next week. For the moment I would content myself with three observations. First, it was clear to me that Germany was proceeding with her programme of rearmament at her own pace and choice without any fear that she would be effectively prevented by others. I did not mean that in no circumstances was agreement about any aspect of armaments possible, but that Germany was satisfied that her own programme would not be modified by external constraint. Secondly, I was completely satisfied that Germany was not prepared to become a party to any mutual assistance pact in the East. She could not, of course, prevent other parties discussing arrangements between themselves, but, while willing to join in a multilateral pact of non-aggression and consultation, she regarded it as a point of principle that she should not enter into a pact of mutual assistance,

<sup>1</sup> No record of this conversation has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>2</sup> April 4.

e.g., with Russia. I observed that there was this difference between the proposed Eastern pact and the pact of Locarno, that in the latter there was a common boundary to be guaranteed, whereas Germany and Russia were not in physical contact. Thirdly, I asked the Ambassador to tell M. Laval that I was confident that Germany well understood that in no circumstances could she detach this country from France. Indeed, I had taken the opportunity during the conversation of emphasising our determination to maintain Anglo-French relations unimpaired; our object in going to Berlin, as I had explained to the Chancellor, was to promote general agreement and not to encourage new relations in one direction at the expense of existing relations in another. The French Government might be assured that this had been most clearly conveyed to Chancellor Hitler, who had on his part acknowledged that he well understood that this remained our position. I added that I hoped that now the visit was over M. Laval and his colleagues would appreciate that the decision to pay the visit was justified, for I was certain that it had only served to increase the comprehension of realities all round.

2. The Ambassador, in referring to next week's meeting at Stresa, spoke of having heard the suggestion that M. Flandin might be going as well as M. Laval, but this, I gathered, was only a rumour. I said I had heard nothing about it and would like to know. I also asked what were M. Laval's ideas about the topics at Stresa, and what did M. Laval consider would be the object of the meeting proposed at Geneva. British Ministers warmly embraced the opportunity of meeting him and Signor Mussolini at Stresa, but I confessed that up to the present I had some difficulty in seeing what the Geneva meeting could accomplish. This was also, I thought, the feeling of, for example, the Polish Government. But no doubt we should be hearing further from the French Government about it.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

#### No. 680

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 2, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 22 Telegraphic [C 2759/55/18]*

*Immediate*

WARSAW, April 2, 1935, 12.35 a.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

I regret that it was impossible to send comments upon the Moscow communiqué<sup>1</sup> last night<sup>2</sup> but final text was only agreed to just before my departure owing to interest M. Stalin himself had taken in its contents and owing to suggested amendments which he had made on the last day.

You will notice that the communiqué falls naturally into two parts. The first part ending with the words 'the best solution of the problem' deals with

<sup>1</sup> See No. 673, note 32.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. on March 31. This telegram was drafted on April 1.



European situation with momentary reference to Anglo-French communiqué.<sup>3</sup> The second part beginning 'the representatives of the two Governments' deals with Anglo-Russian relations.

Soviet representatives were anxious that the first part of the communiqué should deal almost exclusively with Eastern Pact and would have liked some declaration from ourselves emphasising with them that the proposed pact was more than ever necessary. We insisted however upon standing by London communiqué as a whole and first half of communiqué is therefore a compromise by which whilst proposed Eastern Pact is referred to in the first paragraph the passage in respect of security in Eastern Europe appears as a unilateral statement by Soviet representatives alone.

With reference to second half of the communiqué it will be observed that recognition by Soviet Government that our integrity and prosperity are to the advantage of Soviet Union is something new. The affirmation of 'loyalty to obligations assumed by them' is not new but it seemed desirable to secure its repetition in an official communiqué.

Communiqué was shown to Japanese Chargé d'Affaires just before leaving Moscow when he volunteered his satisfaction at its contents. French, Italian and Polish Ambassadors and Ministers of Baltic States were all given some account of the conversations before I left Moscow.

Repeated to Berlin, Paris, Moscow and Rome.

<sup>3</sup> Of February 3, 1935.

## No. 681

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 2, 10.45 p.m.)*

*No. 242 Telegraphic [C 2795/55/18]*

ROME, April 2, 1935, 9.30 p.m.

Today Popolo d'Italia publishes article entitled 'Stresa' of which Signor Mussolini is either the author or the inspirator. Article contains a warning against exaggerated hopes and illusions in regard to Stresa meeting. It points out that chief task of this conference will be to try to reach not only identity of views but also common line of action in the face of certain eventualities between France, England and Italy who it must be admitted did not exactly 'speak with one voice' in reply to German gesture of March 16th.<sup>1</sup> At Stresa the necessary responsibilities have to be assumed without account being taken of results of municipal elections in France or bye-elections in England<sup>2</sup> which had produced a competition in pacificism. Stresa ought also to represent 'a steadfast rock in agitated sea of European politics' and must imply above all renunciation of 'dangerous Utopias of disarmament'.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 570.

<sup>2</sup> A reference presumably to the recent by-elections at Wavertree, Liverpool, and Norwood, London; cf. *The Times*, February 8, p. 15, and March 16, p. 13.

Fascist Italy had since 1922<sup>3</sup> renounced such Utopias. If therefore Stresa as Italy hoped and desired proved itself to be a conference different from the many others which had preceded it and gave concrete results so much the better. But it was necessary to await conclusions before ringing the bells.

<sup>3</sup> Signor Mussolini became Prime Minister in Italy in October 1922.

## No. 682

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris) and Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*  
*No. 137 Saving<sup>1</sup> [A 3190/22/45]*

*Private and Personal*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 2, 1935, 10.30 p.m.*

Following from Sir R. Vansittart.

You will have seen from the notes of the Berlin conversations the conditions on which it was agreed that informal conversations between representatives of the British and German Governments should take place in London on the naval question. You will remember that these conditions included a reserve on our part as to the maintenance of the naval clauses of the Treaty of Versailles pending the conclusion of a new agreement.<sup>2</sup>

We should like to start these talks, which are designed purely to discover what the Germans have in mind, as soon as possible. We regard it as important that these naval questions should continue as in the past to be dealt with separately from other aspects of the question of arms limitation seeing that naval armaments are already limited by treaty and that a naval Conference is due to take place this year for the purpose of negotiating a new treaty. If we wait until after the Easter Parliamentary recess, valuable time will be lost and it will be more difficult to complete the necessary consultations this year.

On the other hand, in view particularly of my telegram No. 84/225,<sup>3</sup> I should be glad to know how you think French/Italian Government would view an invitation on our part—before Stresa—to the German Government to send representatives to London for these discussions.

French/Italian Government know that this step has been in contemplation for some time (to Paris only: see my despatch No. 445 of February 21).<sup>4</sup>

If you think the effect would be bad, we would postpone invitation until after Stresa, which is a crucial and all-important meeting. If you think that no bad impression would be produced, we should naturally like to lose as little time as possible. Please telegraph your view to me personally as soon as possible.

<sup>1</sup> No. 137 Saving to Paris; No. 229 to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 651, p. 728.

<sup>3</sup> No. 664.

<sup>4</sup> In this despatch Sir J. Simon had informed Sir G. Clerk of his conversation that day with M. Corbin concerning recent naval discussions in London and future procedure.

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 3, 9.15 a.m.)*  
*No. 24 Telegraphic [C 2796/55/18]*

*Immediate*

WARSAW, April 3, 1935, 2.29 a.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

I had an interview this afternoon<sup>1</sup> with Marshal Pilsudski. Conversation was not carried on easily because a great part of the Marshal's remarks, all of which were spoken in French, were unintelligible either to myself or to the two Polish Ministers who were present. A considerable portion of his remarks consisted of reminiscences during which he asked of my war experiences and paid a tribute to the British Army in the war.

Main political theme so far as it could be disentangled was that he had his pact with Germany and Russia, that the latter country's policy was always very difficult to fathom, that other nations often misunderstood it and that Mr. Lloyd George in particular was a crowning example of English errors of judgment. As an instance of this he referred to Mr. Lloyd George's support of Denikin.<sup>2</sup> The Marshal had always known that Denikin never had a chance but Mr. Lloyd George had sadly miscalculated the situation. The Marshal appeared to wish that Britain should occupy herself with her colonies and not follow Mr. Lloyd George's bad example. What, for instance, he asked was the political situation in Jamaica.<sup>3</sup> I retorted that if Europe were only a tenth part as important as Jamaica we should not have to worry. I asked the Marshal whether it was his judgment that there was no alternative between isolation for Britain and policies of Mr. Lloyd George. The Marshal replied that in his opinion there was none. I told him for our part that we wished for nothing better than to leave Europe to her own troubles but that our experience was that the present troubles had an unhappy knack of involving our own country. The Marshal did not dissent.

I had the impression of a man now very feeble physically who despite his occasional flashes of which I have given an example, was living completely in the past. In any event he was not to be drawn into discussion of current international politics. So far as he seems to have visualised his own country's position in the present conditions it is as a country which clings to its pacts with each of its great neighbours and refuses resolutely to move from its position or to face any events which might compel it to revise the attitude which it has taken up.

Repeated to Berlin, Moscow, Paris and Rome.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was drafted on April 2.

<sup>2</sup> General Denikin was Commander-in-Chief of White Russian forces in South Russia, 1919-20; cf. First Series, Volume III, Chapter II, and Volume XII, Chapters IV and V.

<sup>3</sup> For an explanation of this reference to 'Jamaica', see The Earl of Avon, *Facing the Dictators*, pp. 168-9.

No. 684

*Sir H. Kennard (Warsaw) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 3, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 23 Telegraphic [C 2793/55/18]*

*Immediate*

WARSAW, April 3, 1935, 3 a.m.

Following from Mr. Eden.

I had a conversation with M. Beck this morning<sup>1</sup> when I gave him some account of conversations in Berlin and Moscow. I then asked M. Beck for his view on European situation and what his intentions were in respect of the Eastern Pact. M. Beck explained at some length the history of Poland's present policy as we have often heard it before. Poland was not opposed to mutual assistance as such as her policy was based upon good relations with her two great neighbours and she would not therefore enter into any arrangement which was liable to endanger those relations with either.

My impression is that while present régime lasts in Poland there is no likelihood of any material modification of this attitude.

In a reference to Central European pact M. Beck remarked that this being a more modest proposal it was the more easily realisable. For his part he regarded it with favour seeing that its object was to encourage amicable relations between a group of states with whom Poland had always had friendly relations.

Later this afternoon M. Beck and I had a short interview with Marshal Pilsudski<sup>2</sup> when I asked him what would be his attitude if a multilateral pact of non-aggression were agreed to in Eastern Europe and if some of the Powers who were parties to this multilateral pact were to enter into arrangements between themselves for mutual assistance. M. Beck replied that he had not very carefully considered this matter but he did not think that he would have any serious objection of principle to such procedure provided that Poland's obligations towards her two neighbours and the League of Nations were not thereby infringed.

Repeated to Berlin, Moscow, Paris, Rome.

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was drafted on April 2.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 683. These two telegrams were despatched in reverse order.

No. 685

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 3, 4.5 p.m.)*  
*No. 243 Telegraphic [A 3202/22/45]*

ROME, April 3, 1935, 2.15 p.m.

Following for Sir R. Vansittart.

*Private and Personal*

Feeling created by decision over Berlin visit on which Italian Government held that previous consultation with them and French Government ought to

have taken place was very strong here. That feeling has now been largely dissipated by Paris meeting and by coming Stresa Conference but something of it still persists as you will see by article of Signor Mussolini on Stresa summarised in my telegram No. 242.<sup>1</sup> Even though naval questions have been dealt with separately in the past I feel sure that an invitation to Germany issued on the eve of the Stresa conference to send representatives to London to discuss naval matters would have a most unhappy effect.<sup>2</sup> Though it may appear unreasonable I fear that after the intimation that I conveyed to Italian Government that His Majesty's Government trusted that governments of France and Italy would come to Stresa with entire liberty of action such an invitation would be regarded here almost as a breach of faith on our part.

<sup>1</sup> No. 681.

<sup>2</sup> For Sir R. Vansittart's request for Sir E. Drummond's views on this matter see No. 682.

**No. 686**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 2, 4.55 p.m.)*

*No. 73 Telegraphic: by telephone [A 3203/22/45]*

PARIS, April 3, 1935

Your telegram No. 137 Saving.<sup>1</sup>

Following for Sir R. Vansittart:

*Private and Personal*

Inconvenience of loss of time is in my opinion far outweighed by disastrous reaction which the issue of the proposed invitation to Germany before Stresa conference would have here.

Repeated to Rome.

<sup>1</sup> No. 682.

**No. 687**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 4)*

*No. 332 [C 2848/55/18]*

BERLIN, April 3, 1935

His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin presents his compliments to H.M. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit to him the under-mentioned document.

*Name and Date*

Memorandum from Air Attaché, of  
2nd April.

*Subject*

German Air Force.

*The Ambassador**April 2, 1935*

In an interview with Oberst Wenni[n]ger of the Reichsluftfahrtministerium on Saturday, 30th March, I had an opportunity of enquiring informally what Herr Hitler exactly meant when he told Sir John Simon last week that Germany has now got air parity with Great Britain;<sup>1</sup> did it refer to our First Line strength or to the figure which was stated as representing our total air strength including reserves (1847 aircraft)?

Oberst Wenniger said he expected he meant our First Line strength; but he added that all he had heard about it was a remark by the Führer in the Officers' Mess after the inspection last week of the Jagd Gruppe at Döberitz. Herr Hitler was saying how Sir John Simon had asked him the size of the German Air Force and he had replied 'about the same as yours'; Wenniger says he then added the remark 'I don't know how many aeroplanes Göring really has got, but that seemed about what there ought to be'.

I do not pretend to know even now what exactly the statement meant, and I gather that Oberst Wenniger does not either. I think, however, that it can now be said with fair confidence that Hitler's remark to Sir John Simon about parity was not an exact or carefully prepared pronouncement, but a more or less loose statement with no very close relationship to actual figures.

F. P. DON

<sup>1</sup> See No. 651, p. 739.**No. 688***Mr. Gurney<sup>1</sup> (Copenhagen) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 5)**No. 58 [C 2854/55/18]*COPENHAGEN, *April 3, 1935*

Sir,

I have the honour to report that a meeting took place here yesterday between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The Danish Prime Minister was also present and after the meeting the following communiqué was issued:—

'At today's meeting, in which M. Stauning, the Minister of State and the three Scandinavian Ministers for Foreign Affairs took part, the information in their possession in regard to the situation was exchanged, and, on the basis of the desire for the cessation of the armaments race, which has always been the keynote of the Scandinavian States' participation in the proceedings of the League of Nations, the questions were discussed which might be expected to come up at the extraordinary meeting of the Council'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Minister at Copenhagen.<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 629, note 3.

2. This meeting was convoked by the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs in view of the fact that Denmark now occupies a seat on the Council, and, as on previous occasions, Dr. Munch was anxious to consult his Scandinavian Colleagues prior to the forthcoming meeting of the Council. As His Excellency explained to me, however, in the course of conversation on the 1st instant it was difficult for them to take any decision as to the attitude to be adopted at this meeting in view of their uncertainty as to the precise questions which will come before the Council or the form which they will take. His Excellency was not able to obtain any guidance either in London or in Paris where he was informed that the attitude of the French Government would depend upon the outcome of the Stresa meeting. From his point of view it was, he said, unfortunate that so short an interval was to elapse between the two meetings, as it would not give him time for consultation with his Scandinavian colleagues.

3. I am forwarding copies of this despatch to His Majesty's Ministers at Stockholm and Oslo.<sup>3</sup>

I have, &c.,  
FRANK GURNEY

<sup>3</sup> In his despatch No. 101 of April 6 Mr. Palaiet, H.M. Ambassador at Stockholm since January 1935, reported that he had visited the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs on April 5 in the hope of extracting from him some information as to the recent meeting in Copenhagen, but had found him 'as usual, a combination of reticence and affability'. Mr. Sandler said that the atmosphere at the meeting 'was decidedly pessimistic' and that the 'key to the situation' lay 'in the hands of His Majesty's Government'. Mr. Palaiet had the impression 'that they are taken aback by recent events and are waiting for a lead from a quarter which they trust'.

## No. 689

*Records of Anglo-Polish Conversations, held at the Raczyński Palace at Warsaw, on April 2 and 3, 1935 (Received April 5)<sup>1</sup>*

[C 2890/55/18]

Present:

*United Kingdom*

MR. EDEN, Lord Privy Seal.

MR. STRANG, Foreign Office.

MR. AVELING, His Majesty's Embassy, Warsaw.

*Poland*

M. BECK, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

COUNT RACZYŃSKI, Polish Ambassador in London.

M. DEBICKI, Private Secretary of Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>1</sup> There is no indication in the file as to how these records were received.

FIRST MEETING, APRIL 2, AT 11 a.m.

MR. EDEN gave M. Beck an outline of the conversations in Berlin and Moscow.<sup>2</sup>

M. BECK stated that his information was on the same lines. Mr. Eden had given him a few particulars which were new to him. He wished to know whether Mr. Eden thought the divergence of view between Berlin and Moscow was rigid, or whether there was any sign of elasticity.

MR. EDEN thought it would be as well first to say something about the joint communiqué issued in Moscow. M. Litvinov had wished to lay special emphasis upon the Eastern Pact, but Mr. Eden had been unwilling to break up the unity of the London communiqué.<sup>3</sup> That was why the statement about the Eastern Pact in the Moscow communiqué had been in the form of a unilateral Soviet statement.

Mr. Eden had received the impression that both M. Stalin and M. Litvinov were perturbed at German intentions. He doubted whether Russia was in a position to take an offensive.

M. BECK said that there were many factors which had to be taken into account in reaching a judgment on this point. It was difficult to reach a definite opinion. What was important was to know whether there was any chance of an agreement. Did the Soviet Government stand firmly upon the Pact in its original form? He himself had not had much conversation with Soviet Representatives on this point. He had dealt chiefly with the French. His own impression was that there was absolute opposition between the views of Berlin and Moscow.

MR. EDEN thought that the Soviet Government were anxious to secure some security arrangement for Eastern Europe and wished it to contain provisions for mutual assistance. They thought that events in Germany, of which they were deeply suspicious, made it necessary for the Great Powers to strengthen the collective peace system. M. Litvinov had thrown out the suggestion of a general European Pact of mutual assistance, but he was not certain that his Government would agree. Unless something was done Russia must, M. Litvinov said, increase her armaments. If it was impossible for Germany and Poland to enter the Pact he said it might be necessary to go on ahead without them. M. Litvinov had not, however, said what the Soviet Government intended to do.

M. Stalin had shown considerable understanding of the German case, but insisted that some security arrangement was necessary in order to meet Germany's growing military power. The Soviet Government were emphatic that they had no desire for expansion and that they would have more than enough to do at home for the next fifty years. In the military sense they were concentrating on air forces, presumably because their transport system was so bad. They had shown Mr. Eden a factory from which it was evident that they were very busy building military aircraft. Mr. Eden added that he had told M. Litvinov that some of Russia's neighbours would not wish to be helped by

<sup>2</sup> See Nos. 651 and 673.

<sup>3</sup> Of February 3, 1935.



Russian military forces. To this M. Litvinov had replied that it might be possible to provide that military assistance should only be forthcoming at the request of the country attacked. It was easy to think of forms of assistance other than military assistance. Mr. Eden had the impression that the Soviet Government thought that Germany would attack somewhere. They thought that there were two schools of thought in Germany. On the one hand, there was Herr Hitler, who, from his hatred of communism, was thinking of expansion in the east. On the other hand, the Reichswehr were thinking of a knock-out blow in the west, so as to be able to extend eastwards; they would prefer in the meantime to make terms with the Soviet Union.

M. BECK said that for Poland, as for all continental countries, relations with neighbouring countries were most important and, in the Polish case, with the two great neighbours, the Soviet Union and Germany. Relations with these two countries occupied 80 per cent. of Polish political activity. After the war Poland was on bad relations with both her neighbours and had two troublesome frontiers. Each small incident contained a germ of serious trouble. In the early years after the war there was talk every Spring of war between Poland and the Soviet Union. Meetings at Geneva were overloaded with business relating to Polish-German disputes.

The Polish Government had done their utmost to find an issue from this situation. There were two stages in the process. First, as a result of an evolution of ideas in Moscow, Poland was able to seize a chance to make an arrangement which had profoundly bettered the atmosphere. The whole of Russia's western frontier was now covered by a series of non-aggression pacts, supplemented by a definition of the aggressor. The Polish Government now hoped that Polish-Russian quarrels were for the time being exhausted.

In the same way, at a later stage, events made it possible to regulate affairs with Germany. After Germany left the League, the Polish Government asked the German Government what their intentions were. The reply was satisfactory, to the effect that Germany's withdrawal from the League did not imply any intention to diminish the stability of her relations with her neighbours. She was, on the contrary, prepared to stabilise them. This was the origin of the Polish-German arrangement.

In M. Beck's view these two arrangements had been of service to general peace. The desire to live at peace with her neighbours dominated Polish policy. The question the Polish Government always asked, when a new proposal was made, was, first, would the new action destroy the results already obtained, and, secondly, would it bring any new advantages? Mr. Eden had evidently come away with the impression that the atmosphere between Berlin and Moscow was thoroughly bad. This was not a comfortable situation for Poland; but it was certainly of advantage to Europe that Poland lay between Germany and the Soviet Union, and that the latter had no common frontier. Poland now had no troublesome frontier, but two comfortable frontiers.

MR. EDEN said that he recognised this.

M. BECK went on to say that if Poland bound herself as regards Germany alone or the Soviet Union alone with some pact of mutual assistance, she

would immediately have one bad frontier again. If either Berlin or Moscow thought that Warsaw had made a *bloc* with the other, at once there would be a change in the atmosphere of the frontier affected. The basis of Polish foreign policy was thus very simple. The trouble was that people were not satisfied with simple explanations. He would be glad if Mr. Eden would remember what he had said.

M. Beck emphasised that Poland, as a member of the League, had no desire to see the League weakened or neglected. She thought it of the first importance to maintain the existing organisation, and was not likely to act against the League.

Poland's alliances with France and Roumania<sup>4</sup> were purely defensive and were not a menace to anyone. She stood firmly by her alliances. These were not affected by her relations with Germany and Russia.

As regards the Rome Agreement,<sup>5</sup> this was rather different from the proposed Eastern Pact. Poland adopted a friendly attitude to it. It did not raise vital questions like those of her relations with Germany and Russia. Poland had traditional relations of friendship with Danubian countries. She did not enter into local arrangements, such, for example, as the Little *Entente*. Poland was as close to Hungary as to Yugoslavia. Such combinations had divided the Danubian region rather than consolidated it. In their view the idea of the Rome Agreement might lead to appeasement and growth of confidence in Central Europe. The Polish Government were therefore favourable to that agreement in its main lines.

He did not think there was any conflict between British policy and Polish policy as he had just defined it. What the Polish Government desire is stability. He had thought it worth while to go into the question in some detail. What he was still anxious to know was whether the opposition between Berlin and Moscow was absolute or whether there was any room for progress towards an agreement. This was a point to which everyone must give thought.

MR. EDEN thanked M. Beck for his frankness. There was in England great sympathy for the Polish position, and understanding of Poland's geographical difficulties. It was recognised that she desired to seek a solution.

He fully recognised the difficult position Poland was in, lying between Germany and Russia. But if France and Russia should agree, what would be the position of the Polish Government?

M. BECK said that if such an agreement did not prejudice the positive achievements of the Polish Government, that is to say, the double stability which they had succeeded in building up, the Polish Government would be hardly likely to object. Poland had no negative doctrine in the matter of collective arrangements.

<sup>4</sup> A Political Agreement between Poland and France had been signed at Paris on February 19, 1921 (see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 118, pp. 342-3) and a Convention of Defensive Alliance between Poland and Roumania at Bucharest on March 3, 1921 (see *ibid.*, vol. 114, pp. 916-17).

<sup>5</sup> A reference to the agreement regarding Austria reached between the French and Italian Governments at Rome on January 7, 1935; cf. No. 335.

MR. EDEN enquired what would be the attitude of the Polish Government if within the framework of a multilateral non-aggression pact, some of the parties concluded separate arrangements of mutual assistance.

M. BECK replied that he had not studied this question. He thought it was necessary to examine the probable results of each eventuality. Would such an arrangement destroy the small capital that Poland had accumulated? If not, he did not think the Polish Government would have difficulties to put forward. They would have to study the question and see how it would work out in practice. They would not be guided by abstract consideration but by practical probabilities.

MR. EDEN said that he understood that Poland might not want to be helped by Germany or Russia.

M. BECK observed that the Polish Government had never made any official statement to this effect, though stories of this kind had appeared in the newspapers. The original Polish objection to the Eastern Pact was that no one had really worked out its practical applications. This was the basis of their scepticism. They had never said very much about mutual assistance in their conversations about the pact.

MR. EDEN explained that he was trying to find some element in the Polish view that was not common to the German view.

M. BECK repeated that he had never spoken, in official conversations or in diplomatic correspondence, about the principle of mutual assistance. The subject required very deep study. The idea of mutual assistance did not at all shock him. The principle of mutual assistance was, of course, in the Covenant. There was also mutual assistance in the Polish Arrangement with France. It was not to the abstract idea that he took exception.

MR. EDEN remarked that it was a pity that the German Government had taken a negative view about the idea of optional mutual assistance within a multilateral pact of non-aggression.

M. BECK said that for Poland this was never a preoccupation. The position of Poland was different from that of Germany; Poland was glad to have brought about appeasement with her neighbours.

MR. EDEN asked whether the Polish Government did not share the anxiety of the Soviet Government as regards Germany.

M. BECK observed that the Soviet Union had no common frontier with Germany. He could not understand why the Soviet Government should be so anxious.

He recalled that Poland had been attacked by the whole European press, except perhaps the British, in 1932 for signing the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> This was regarded as a betrayal of civilisation. Since then the whole of the Russian western frontier had been covered by non-aggression pacts, including even Roumania. The 1,100 kilom. of frontier with Russia and the 1,000 kilom. of frontier with Germany were now quite quiet. It was the incidents of international daily life that really mattered, not the great and possibly less immediate dangers. If the daily difficulties were

<sup>6</sup> On July 25, 1932; cf. No. 111, note 2.

smoothed over, a normal atmosphere would be created and the new generation would grow up with a better outlook.

As regards the Baltic States, Poland had a traditional policy of friendship with them. M. Beck was glad to have brought Finland into a series of non-aggression pacts on the same basis as the other neighbours of Russia.

MR. EDEN said that he thought that the Baltic States would be very glad if an Eastern Pact could be concluded.

M. BECK said that he thought that their chief preoccupation was that of becoming the object of a diplomatic game. He doubted whether they were enthusiastic about the Eastern Pact. They approached it with many reserves. They had not, in fact, much fear as to their direct insecurity.

MR. EDEN asked whether he might take it that M. Beck's position was that Poland was not opposed in principle to mutual assistance, but that she would be opposed to any arrangement that would destroy or impair the arrangements she had made with her two neighbours.

M. BECK replied that this was so. The question of mutual assistance was a most complicated one, and it had never really been studied either from the technical or political point of view. The proposed Central European Pact had more chance of realisation than the Eastern Pact, because it was more modest in scale and was the concern of fewer countries. It was difficult enough to negotiate even bilateral arrangements.

MR. EDEN then returned to the question of armaments. Germany was rearming quickly. Did M. Beck see in the recent German demands any possibility of the conclusion of a limitation agreement?

M. BECK said that it was extremely difficult to see how to proceed. He had told the French Government that he was apprehensive as regards their appeal to the Council about the German declaration of the 16th March. He feared that this would weaken the League. The French had not sent any reply, but he saw no reason to dissent from the proposal that the Council should meet on the 15th April. The meeting would, however, do no good. If Germany could be brought back to the League, this would be all to the good. What Mr. Eden had told him about the German demands had much impressed him. He did not think they would have asked for so much.

M. Beck said that it had occurred to him that the present demands made upon almost every hand for new arrangements of mutual assistance might perhaps be interpreted as a sign of lack of confidence in the League.

MR. EDEN agreed that the idea of automatic pacts was perhaps not good for the League. What was really disturbing public opinion was Germany's withdrawal.

M. BECK informed Mr. Eden in confidence that he was in contact with the French Government as to the possibility of a visit by M. Laval to Warsaw on his way to Moscow. Mr. Eden said that he found it difficult to see what could be done next. He did not think that M. Litvinov had made up his mind.

M. Beck remarked that the animosity between Berlin and Moscow was very great and was characteristic of the present period. They were both

Governments which based their actions on doctrine or vast popular movements. They differed in this from other countries.

MR. EDEN observed that, on his visit to Berlin in 1934, Herr Hitler had spoken of France, not of Russia. The growth of armaments was continuing. The rearmament of Germany was formidable and was causing anxiety in England.

He thought it well to let M. Beck know that Herr Hitler had said that there was no arrangement between Poland and Germany other than that with which the public was acquainted.

M. BECK confirmed that this was so.

MR. EDEN replied that he had pointed out to the Chancellor and Baron von Neurath that the Rosenberg Plan was a cause of anxiety in many quarters. They had merely laughed and had given the impression that Rosenberg was not to be taken seriously.

M. BECK said that he had told M. Litvinov that he did not think that there was any danger for Russia from Germany unless Poland participated, and that Poland had not the slightest intention of so doing.

There were two factors in the Soviet position, namely, Germany and Japan. There seemed to be some improvement recently in Soviet-Japanese relations. It seemed to him that Japan knew how to deal with the Russians. They provoked them up to the very limits of prudence, but knew exactly when to stop. He wished he could find the formula.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

#### SECOND MEETING, APRIL 3, AT 11 a.m.

M. BECK said he wondered whether His Majesty's Government had any definite views as to the procedure for the further continuation of the general exchanges of view.

MR. EDEN thought that His Majesty's Government would be unable to give any definite opinion on this point until they knew the results of all the visits. The situation had certainly been clarified, but it could hardly be said that any approach had been made to agreement.

M. BECK said that the Polish Government would be glad to continue to maintain contact, if there should be any new circumstances or further developments in the general situation.

He added that he had just received information from the Baltic States which confirmed the views he had expressed the day before as to their attitude to the Eastern Pact. What the Baltic States wanted was tranquillity. They did not wish to be the object of conversations.

MR. AVELING asked whether there had been any new developments regarding Lithuania.

M. BECK replied that the Polish Government had always regarded this as a unilateral conflict. The Lithuanian Government based their attitude on two negative factors, namely, a Russo-Polish conflict and a Russo-German. Neither of these conflicts now existed and the Lithuanians were rather at a loss.

MR. EDEN said he would like to confirm one matter which had been mentioned in a conversation he had alone with M. Beck on the previous day.<sup>7</sup> He had asked M. Beck what would be his attitude if a multilateral pact of non-aggression were agreed to in Eastern Europe, and if some of the Powers who were parties to this multilateral pact were to enter into arrangements between themselves for mutual assistance. Was he right in thinking that M. Beck's view was that he would not have any serious objection to the principle of such a procedure, provided that Poland's obligations towards her two neighbours and the League of Nations were not infringed thereby?

M. BECK confirmed this was so.

It was then agreed that a joint communiqué should be issued to the press. The text of this communiqué is given in Annex 1.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See No. 684.

<sup>8</sup> Not printed; see *The Times*, April 4, p. 14.

### No. 690

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 5, 4 p.m.)*

*No. 90 Saving: Telegraphic [C 2891/55/18]*

BERLIN, April 4, 1935

I understand from a source in close touch with the Chancellor that he is perturbed (1) by the present rather cool attitude of the majority of the British Press towards him and (2) by the Moscow communiqué and by the warmth of the reception given to Mr. Eden in Russia. He is beginning to wonder whether he was wise to have raised such questions as the return of the Colonies and his demand for a large fleet on the top of his very negative attitude on practically all the matters at issue. He fears that by acting thus he may have caused Great Britain to adopt an isolationist policy which would by no means suit his book. On the other hand, he affects to believe that he was right to be entirely frank with us.

This healthy attitude will, however, naturally not last if the 'Times' continues to give him encouragement, as I understand it does in its issue of today.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The reference is presumably to the leader entitled 'The British Role', see *The Times*, April 4, p. 15.

### No. 691

*Sir J. Simon to Sir E. Drummond (Rome)*

*No. 436 [C 2898/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 4, 1935

Sir,

Signor Grandi saw me to-day to communicate some reflections of the Italian Government with reference to the approaching conference at Stresa.

The Ambassador told me that he was himself coming to the conference. The points mentioned were the following, and I understand that they have already been communicated to the French Government.<sup>1</sup>

1. Uselessness of proceeding with the conversations with Germany on the bases indicated by Germany in the Berlin conversations;
2. Necessity that Germany should be made to feel the solidarity between the other Powers as well as their strong determination to avoid her embarking on some further adventure which might lead to war;
3. Attitude to be taken towards the German decree of March 16th. In this connection, have the British Government already formed some definite opinion?
4. Necessity of solving the question of the smaller States which are also disarmed by Treaty. Whatever Germany might obtain should be granted to them as well, but through a convention;
5. Agreement on the direct means to be employed for the protection of Austrian independence and integrity.

I repeated to the Ambassador my impression that, whereas Germany's objection to an Eastern Pact in the form which would include joint assistance as between Germany and Russia was absolute, the objections raised by Germany to a pact about Austria were not of an equally fundamental kind but turned largely on the difficulty of defining 'interference' and the like. The meeting at Stresa, I thought, would be largely for the purpose of collating information, and, while the consideration of well-devised methods for promoting European solidarity would be very much to the point, it would be necessary to make it plain that these were intended to give the opportunity for Germany to be included, so that if her inclusion did not take place there could be no doubt where the fault lay. Another matter on which we should need to be most careful was that we did not make the situation worse by indulging in loud and repeated denunciations which led to no result. It was indeed very difficult to decide what should be said or done but I was convinced that the only useful line would be found in something which, while demonstrating our solidarity, would be constructive and not merely denunciatory.

I am, &c.,  
JOHN SIMON

<sup>1</sup> They had also been outlined by Signor Suvich to Sir E. Drummond on the morning of April 1 (as reported by Sir E. Drummond in his telegram No. 240, received April 2, 9.30 a.m., not printed), and had been forwarded to Sir R. Vansittart by Signor Grandi in a letter of April 2.

**No. 692**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 5)*

*No. 334 [C 2885/55/18]*

*Immediate*

**BERLIN, April 4, 1935**

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith four maps<sup>1</sup> which I have received from Baron von Neurath, together with a translation of his covering letter.<sup>2</sup>

2. The first map shows the strength of the various air forces in Europe classifying first and second line aircraft. You will observe that no figure is given for Germany and that the Polish air force is the only one not depicted as a potential aggressor. The strength of the British and French air forces as estimated on the map is stated to include formations employed overseas.

3. The second map shows the military strength of certain European countries. The British army is left out of account and Russia is shown as possessing 101 divisions, or nearly three times as many as Germany. Assuming that the strength of a Russian division is approximately that of a German division this calculation places the Russian standing army at about 1,500,000 men.

4. The third map shows the demilitarised zone and the relative defencelessness of Germany.

5. The fourth map shows the colonial territory, including mandates, belonging to the various European Powers. Probably in consequence of your observations regarding the status of the Dominions,<sup>3</sup> a clear distinction has been made between the Dominions and India on the one hand and British Crown Colonies and mandated territories on the other.

I have, &c.,

**ERIC PHIPPS**

<sup>1</sup> Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 651, p. 727.

**No. 693**

*Record of an Anglo-Czechoslovak Conversation held at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Prague, on Thursday, April 4, 1935, at 10 a.m. (Received April 5)<sup>1</sup>*

*[C 2930/55/18]*

**Present:**

*United Kingdom*

**MR. EDEN, Lord Privy Seal.**

**SIR J. ADDISON, His Majesty's Minister at Prague.**

**MR. STRANG, Foreign Office.**

<sup>1</sup> There is no indication in the file as to how this record was received.



### *Czechoslovakia*

M. BENES, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

M. JAN MASARYK, Czechoslovak Minister in London.

MR. EDEN gave M. Benes an account of the conversations at Berlin, Moscow and Warsaw.<sup>2</sup>

M. BENES asked whether Herr Hitler had said anything about not recognising the *status quo* in Central Europe.

MR. EDEN replied that, on the contrary, the Chancellor had indicated that he did not wish to upset the territorial clauses of the Treaty, terrible as they were for Germany.

M. BENES asked whether M. Litvinov had asked about the connection between the Eastern Pact and Locarno.

MR. EDEN said that M. Litvinov had asked whether Great Britain would be bound to go to the help of Germany if France attacked Germany in consequence of an attack by Germany upon one of her allies, or in consequence of an attack by Germany which brought the Eastern Pact into play. Mr. Eden had replied that Locarno was a complicated instrument and that it was desirable to have such questions precisely stated. But he thought the answer was in the negative.

M. BENES asked whether M. Beck had made any statement about the scope of the Polish-German agreement.<sup>3</sup>

MR. EDEN replied that Herr Hitler had declared that that agreement contained nothing that was not known to the public, and that M. Beck had confirmed this.

M. BENES asked whether there had been any mention of Czechoslovakia in the Warsaw conversations.

MR. EDEN said there had not.

M. BENES said that two other questions he had wished to ask had already been answered, namely: (1) the Polish attitude to the Central European pact, and (2) the Polish attitude towards optional mutual assistance arrangements within a multilateral non-aggression pact for Eastern Europe.

M. BENES then gave an account of Czechoslovak policy with special reference to the London communiqué.<sup>4</sup>

Czechoslovakia was, from her geographical position, very closely interested in both the Central European and the Eastern Pacts.

#### *Central European Pact*

M. BENES thought such a pact indispensable from the point of view both of the future position of Austria and of the development of relations in Central Europe. The Little *Entente* were interested in it, particularly as regards Hungary; and Yugoslavia from the point of view of Italy. The pact had a double aspect; the aspect that concerned the relations between the Western Great Powers and Germany; and the aspect that concerned Central Europe.

<sup>2</sup> See Nos. 651, 673, and 689.

<sup>3</sup> Of January 26, 1934; see No. 1, note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Of February 3, 1935; see No. 400, note 4 and Annex.

The three States of the Little *Entente* would have to enter the pact in order to guarantee Austria, though Yugoslavia would require certain guarantees touching her relations with Italy. He and M. Titulescu were keeping Yugoslavia calm.

The Little *Entente* had agreed that France and Italy should try to reach an agreement on a text, it being understood that Austria would be a party on a footing of equality, and not merely as a protected State.

The French Government knew the views of the Little *Entente*, and the Italian Government those of the Hungarian Government. M. Benes had discussed the principle of the pact with both the French and Italian Governments. He had not seen the text, but thought it had been virtually agreed upon between France and Italy. He had no doubt that the Little *Entente* and Hungary would be able to concur in it. The three Governments of the Little *Entente* were severally informing the French and Italian Governments in writing that they adhered in principle to the proposed pact. He had signed the letter that morning and would give a copy to Sir J. Addison. He hoped that further progress would be made at Stresa.

He quite understood the German difficulty about the definition of non-interference, and had discussed this with the French Government. It would not be reasonable, for example, to try to prevent the publication in Hungary of articles by professors about treaty revision; but there ought to be no violent systematic campaign against the integrity of States. The Italian Government were in agreement on this point.

What would be the position if Hitlerism were to win the day in Austria? He now thought this was less probable than it had been, though Herr Hitler was convinced it would come. If it did happen, the rules of international law must be observed. There could be no intervention from outside to upset it. But if there was any doubt as to the independence and sovereignty of Austria, this would change his outlook on Austria. He would break off political and economic relations with Austria and see how matters developed. Italy might adopt a more radical policy and march.

MR. EDEN asked whether such a rupture of relations would not drive Austria completely into the German orbit.

M. BENES said he was not convinced of this. Hitler did not wish to increase his economic difficulties by swallowing Austria. Two-thirds of Austria's economic relations were with the South. If the Austrian people knew that such a rupture would be a consequence of adventure on their part, they would not embark upon adventures. The Three-Power declaration<sup>5</sup> had helped to stabilise the position. Austria was now showing a tendency to establish better relations with the Little *Entente*. Czechoslovakia was trying to help Austria economically, the Little *Entente* wanted closer association with Hungary also, so that it could extend its scope.

As regards the Habsburgs, his view was as follows: he had no right to intervene in the matter of a mere change of régime, such as from a republic to a monarchy. But he drew a distinction between the restoration of the

<sup>5</sup> Of September 27, 1934; cf. No. 124, note 1.

Habsburgs and the restoration of the monarchy as such. The former was an international question, the latter an internal question. He could not agree to a restoration of the Habsburgs. The Ambassadors' Conference had, in agreement with the Little *Entente*, come to a decision on this matter, and Hungary had entered into an obligation *vis-à-vis* both the Ambassadors' Conference and the Little *Entente* which had been registered with the League of Nations.<sup>6</sup> He did not want to have an article in the Central European Pact on this subject, but he would state his point of view.

### *Eastern Pact*

M. BENES said he was in favour of the proposed pact. It was in conformity with the League of Nations, and would bring Russia into Europe in the most acceptable circumstances. Germany thought it would merely mask a Franco-Soviet alliance. To Poland, placed between her two great neighbours, it evoked memories of partition. Czechoslovakia would have no objection to being helped by Germany against Poland or Russia, though she was, of course, not in so difficult a position as Poland.

It was now clear that Germany and Poland could not both be brought into the pact. What was to be done?

One possibility was a multilateral non-aggression pact with a superstructure of separate mutual assurance agreements. M. Benes had suggested this to M. Litvinov at Geneva, but the latter had held to his original conception of the pact, and had been opposed to the suggestion as leading to the creation of separate *blocs*.

M. Benes emphasised that in his view the opposition of Germany to the proposed pact was based not on fear of Russia, but on considerations relating to Poland. M. Litvinov was right in saying that there were two tendencies in Germany, viz., those favoured respectively by Hitler and by the Reichswehr. The former was temporary, the latter permanent. The Reichswehr were the people who initiated the policy of Rapallo and still wished to have the possibility of manœuvre with Russia. The essential fact was that the guarantee to Poland under the proposed pact would fix the Polish Corridor.

If Germany had designs on Memel and the Baltic States, the first obstacle would be Poland. Both Germany and Poland had good reasons for making their recent agreement. One advantage to Germany was that she could now put a case which was likely to receive a sympathetic hearing in Western Europe, particularly as the Bolsheviks were nowhere very popular. There was great uncertainty in Poland at present, whether to pursue the policy of the marshal<sup>7</sup> or not.

MR. EDEN asked what was M. Benes' idea for the future.

M. BENES said that there was either the idea of a superstructure, of which he had just spoken; or that of a general pact based on the Covenant, of which

<sup>6</sup> League of Nations Treaty Series, No. 387; cf. *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 116, pp. 513-17, *Exchange of Notes between British, French, and Italian Representatives at Budapest and the Hungarian Government relative to the Deposition of all the Members of the House of Habsburg*, signed at Budapest on November 4, 5, 6, and 12, 1921.

<sup>7</sup> i.e. Marshal Pilsudski.

the parties might be France, Russia, the Baltic States, Czechoslovakia and Roumania, and which would stand open for others. The only other alternative was something hardly distinguishable from a Franco-Soviet alliance.

Something must certainly be done. It would be disastrous to leave Russia in isolation, for then she would make an agreement with Germany at the expense of others. Signor Mussolini shared this opinion. Poland must not be thrown into the arms of Germany, nor Russia left in isolation. Russia wanted peace for internal reasons, and had been driven into closer association with the Western Powers through fear of Germany and Japan. If this had not been so, there would be much more Communist propaganda going on. Russia had evolved, and must be kept in tow. It was essential, therefore, that some declaration should issue from the Stresa meeting to the effect that some security arrangement for Eastern Europe was indispensable.

MR. EDEN asked M. Benes if he knew why the Poles so gaily ignored the German menace.

M. BENES said Poland considered herself a Great Power and thought that Western Europe should consider her collaboration as indispensable for European peace. He recalled how at Geneva in 1925 Count Skrzynski had said that the war of 1914 had broken out because Poland did not exist.<sup>8</sup> Poland resented the re-emergence of Russia as a European Power, as this thrust Poland into the background.

#### *Relations with Germany*

M. BENES said that he had had no real conflict with Germany for sixteen years. He did not want one and was convinced he would not have one. If a conflict arose, it would arise out of some other European dispute. If a major European dispute arose, Czechoslovakia must either be completely out of it like Switzerland, or in the thick of it. Czechoslovak policy must always be a Western policy.

(Here M. Benes continued his exposition with the aid of a wall-map.) The 'Anschluss' was more an Italian problem than a Czechoslovak problem. In the event of the 'Anschluss' coming about, he would be bound to follow the Western Powers. He was not anti-German and would not join in an anti-German policy. If the Great Powers were to admit the *fait accompli* of the 'Anschluss,' he would make his terms with Germany. The Czechs had been encircled by Germans for 1,200 years. The position was not new to them. He had told Mussolini this; Italy was more concerned than Czechoslovakia.

His own policy in regard to Berlin was a function of the policy of Paris towards Berlin. He would accept in advance whatever might be decided at Stresa. He wanted nothing special for himself. He wanted to be on the best possible terms with Germany. He was not afraid of Germany. Germany did not want to dismember Czechoslovakia—she wanted all or nothing—and would leave the German population where it was *pour nous embêter*. He had,

<sup>8</sup> See *L/N.O.J., S.S. No. 33*, p. 43. Count Skrzynski, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs and permanent delegate to the League of Nations, was speaking at the meeting of the Assembly held on Friday, September 11, 1925, at 10.30 a.m.

despite reports to the contrary, counselled moderation in Paris for years past. He wanted a pact which would include Germany. If left to face Germany alone, he would make terms. If he were to act with the Great Powers, he would oppose all imperialist or expansionist policies contrary to the League of Nations. He was not afraid for the future.

If Austria, Hungary or Bulgaria followed the German example of the 16th March and repudiated the disarmament clauses of the Treaty, he would break off relations and appeal to the League. Roumania would mobilize. The Little *Entente* wished to regulate the affairs of these three countries at Geneva by way of a general disarmament convention.

MR. EDEN asked how M. Benes thought this was possible in view of Germany's present demands.

M. BENES made no clear reply.

He said, in conclusion, that he thought peace could be saved. If Germany and the other ex-enemy Powers knew that the three Western Powers were agreed on a general line and that the Little *Entente* were with them, the 'Anschluss' would not come to pass. It would be possible to hold the position until there was a change of régime in Germany. If the soldiers came into power there, the immediate danger would pass, although the more remote danger might be increased.

It was agreed to issue the annexed communiqué.<sup>9</sup>

(The meeting then closed.)

<sup>9</sup> Not printed. See *The Times*, April 5, p. 16.

## No. 694

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent*

[C 2922/55/18]

BERLIN, April 4, 1935

My dear Sargent,

Chilston was kind enough to send me a copy of the record of Eden's conversations with Litvinov on March 28th and 29th.<sup>1</sup>

On page 13 of the record for March 28th<sup>2</sup> Litvinov is quoted as saying that 'the Reichswehr were much less hostile (than Hitler) to the Eastern Pact and were always ready to make a bargain with the Soviet Union. . . .' Their plan 'was always to dispose of France first. . . .'

It is difficult to ascertain what the real views of the Reichsheer as a whole are. Blomberg and other officers echo, like everyone else with whom one discusses the matter, the Führer's phrases about the menace from Bolshevik Russia and his arguments about the Eastern Pact. At the same time it is

<sup>1</sup> See No. 673.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., p. 779 above. The punctuation in the following quotations is as in the original letter.

evident that many army officers are still prepared to resume the friendly relations with the Russian army which they enjoyed for so long. General von Seeckt's influence<sup>3</sup> is still strong among senior officers who were trained to think that Germany's interests would be better served by alliance with Russia than with the Western Powers. Moreover, although the former close relations between the two armies were interrupted by the Nazi régime, visits to Russian munition factories continued until as late as last year, according to information recently given to Thorne by the late Master-General of the Ordnance.

The Reichswehr Ministry always used to hold the view that Germany would have nothing to fear from Bolshevism once the German economic position improved. Hitler doubtless believes himself to be sincere when he fulminates against the Bolshevik menace and preaches the necessity of Europe uniting in defence of her civilisation. But you won't forget that the language he used five and even three years ago about Poland and the Corridor was almost as violent. In the meantime the Bolshevik bogey affords a useful excuse for German rearmament and for urging the need for European unity which is only a euphemism for German domination.

As regards Litvinov's belief that the Reichsheer have always aimed at disposing of France first, this Embassy certainly understood, in the days when Hammerstein was *Chef der Heeresleitung*,<sup>4</sup> that the policy of the Reichswehr Ministry was to use, at the outset of war, just sufficient strength in the East to enable them to establish connection across the Corridor with East Prussia and then to devote the whole remaining resources of the country to defeat the inevitable invasion by France. This was the theory of 'Mein Kampf' and of Rosenberg's essay on foreign policy. Owing to the reorganisation of the German army that plan is possibly changed, and to-day we hear and see that much of the new army equipment is designed for use on the plains, that is to say in the east of Germany and not in the west.

So much for the Reichswehr attitude. It must always be remembered that Hitler's struggle since 1918 has been directed against Communism, and that he regards Moscow as the source of all evil. His hatred of Communism is fanatical, and he has inspired men like General von Blomberg with his ideas. It is hard to see how he could explain to his followers the need for a rapprochement with Russia. Such a volte-face appears impossible for a long time to come in view of all that has happened in Germany during recent years.

A reversion to the Rapallo policy<sup>5</sup> would also involve a change in the attitude to Poland. Hence it seems to me that the Polish Pact will be allowed to run its course so far as Germany is concerned and that no fresh orientation will take place until the ten years have expired.

Somewhere in the course of the discussions at Moscow Litvinov said that he could only conclude that Germany had refused to enter the collective system because she wished to keep her hands free.<sup>6</sup> This remark sounds trite, but in my opinion it is essentially true. Hitler's policy to-day has no definite aim in view. It is his intention to make this country so strong that when an

<sup>3</sup> General von Seeckt was Commander-in-Chief of the German army, 1920-6.

<sup>4</sup> 1930-4.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 673, p. 777.

<sup>6</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 771.

opportunity does occur Germany will be able to avail herself of it. A great deal of the discussions which are now going on seem to me to be beside the point. At an earlier stage in the Moscow talks Eden gave the German reasons for rejecting multilateral pacts of mutual assistance. The real reason to my mind for Germany's refusal is the simple one given above that Hitler wants to keep his hands free. If we go back to first principles, the situation immediately becomes clearer. The first German territorial aim is the Corridor. When Hitler came into power he was compelled to save his neck at all costs. Hence his pact with Poland. That pact was a piece of insincerity. He is now in the awkward position of having to defend one piece of insincerity by another, or rather by a chain of insincerities. So long as he has reason to fear Russia, Poland is indispensable to him. How is he to keep Poland friendly and at the same time fulfil his primary aim, i.e. recover the Corridor? Only by compensating Poland elsewhere. An obvious solution would be to divide the Carpathian portion of Czechoslovakia into two parts and assign the northern to Poland in return for the Corridor, and the southern to Hungary in return for an alliance. This is one of his pet schemes when revising the map of Europe with his cronies. This opens the road, he says, to Roumania, the Black Sea and the Near East. Hence his objection to tying his hands with pacts.

Personally I have no very clear ideas as to the course to be pursued at Stresa. I feel that if we erect too much barbed wire whether along Hitler's southern or eastern frontier, we will head the beast back to the west, or start him on some new venture, say overseas. I do not see any hard and fast policy which can safely be pursued. The French I suppose will continue to prefer the shadow to the substance, an Eastern Pact or anything in the way of paper to an arms convention. At one moment they assert that they have no faith in German promises or German signatures. In the same breath they demand more promises and more signatures, an Eastern Pact and a Danubian Pact.

If the French will not look at an arms convention, I suppose we shall have to choose between a policy of disinterest in Europe and a fresh policy of isolating or encircling Germany. So long as Poland remains in the enemy camp, the policy of isolation is seriously impaired. In the present circumstances a Bull of Excommunication solemnly pronounced at Stresa will hardly have much effect on Hitler's nerves. It will merely give him an excuse for a fresh manifesto to 'Mein Volk' and a fresh outbreak of patriotic fervour. Perhaps our best course will be to take things quietly and see if something can be done to strengthen the League and convert it from a purely passive into a really active instrument, not for the preservation of obsolete treaties but for their revision. Somewhere in that direction lies the only hope of progress. It may sound a platitude but unless there is some machinery for dealing promptly and effectively with European problems they will be solved ultimately by the sword. Questions like Memel can and must be solved by League initiative; if not they will inevitably be settled as they have always been settled in the past by resort to violence.

Yours ever,  
ERIC PHIPPS

No. 695

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 5, 2.50 p.m.)  
No. 55 Telegraphic [C 2892/55/18]*

MOSCOW, April 5, 1935, 4.17 p.m.

A very good impression here has undoubtedly been made by Mr. Eden's visit. Great cordiality was shown to him; and it is clear that Soviet Government regard the visit as of great importance as establishing closer contact and full exchange of views. M. Litvinof and Stalin, as my French and Italian and many other colleagues have told me and as I myself was able to observe, were impressed by Mr. Eden's frankness and sincerity. This as I also observed evoked similar and somewhat unusual frankness on the part of M. Litvinof. At the outset the Soviet Government appear to have got rid of the bogey in their minds, that we were encouraging Germany against Soviet plans for Eastern security and that a considerable section of British public opinion would even view without disfavour German expansionist adventures in Eastern Europe. It is realised that visit was only explanatory and explorative. At the same time it is believed Great Britain can be regarded as supporting the principle of an organisation of collective security in the whole of Europe and is against any disturbance of peace anywhere.

Press shows reserve and has no comments since those reported in my telegram No. 53.<sup>1</sup>

The French and Italian Ambassadors and the Estonian Minister and others have come to me to express appreciation of opportunities given by Mr. Eden of conversations with them.

<sup>1</sup> Of April 1, not printed.

No. 696

*Memorandum on Questions for discussion at the Stresa Conference<sup>1</sup>  
[C 3049/55/18]\**

*Secret*

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 5, 1935

The annexed memorandum is a 'brief' for Stresa. The main points for decision at Monday's<sup>2</sup> Cabinet are in Part III of the Memorandum, more particularly:—

- (1) *Eastern Pact*—what is to be our attitude to this, having regard to German objections? (paragraphs 18 and 19).

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum, with Sir J. Simon's preliminary comments, was communicated to the Cabinet as C.P. 79 (35). A note on the memorandum states that it was prepared in the Foreign Office before Mr. Eden's return. Mr. Eden, originally expected back from Prague on April 4, had been delayed by illness and bad weather and did not arrive until the evening of April 5.

<sup>2</sup> April 8.



- (2) *Austria*—the same question (paragraph 21).
- (3) *Locarno*—what should be our answer to the French request to be more definite about our intentions under the Locarno Treaty? (paragraph 17).
- (4) *The Air Pact*—can we press for it by itself? (paragraphs 12 and 13).
- (5) *Armaments of Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria* (paragraph 22).

At a preliminary discussion between the Prime Minister and some of his colleagues who were available to-day, the line suggested to be taken about the Eastern Pact was developed somewhat as follows:—

We should begin by asking for full examination of the proposal made by Germany (Annex 1 on page 9),<sup>3</sup> urging that though it does not go as far as some others desire, it none the less goes some way and should not be rejected out of hand. This may be expected to bring up the difficulty that Hitler has indicated that he objected to such a pact of non-aggression and consultation being supplemented by agreements between certain of the signatories to furnish mutual assistance if the Pact was disregarded. We should indicate that we did not consider that Germany had any right to take such an objection merely because she was not prepared to go further herself. It would be far better to agree to the German proposal as far as it went, while indicating that some States would wish to make agreements amongst themselves for mutual assistance. If Germany then took up the attitude that in such circumstances she was not prepared to offer to join in any Eastern Pact at all, that would show where the blame for the breakdown really lay. On the other hand, if at Stresa the German formula is merely rejected as worthless, Germany will certainly exploit the position by saying that she made an offer which was rejected. In presenting this line of argument, we ought to lay stress on our own public opinion and insist that we can only approve of a course which would satisfy our public opinion that everything was being done by the Powers to bring Germany into the agreement and to meet any reasonable objections.

We should also sound the others at Stresa on any other alternative to the original conception of the Eastern Pact. A variant which has been suggested is as follows:<sup>4</sup> Germany professes to be very much afraid of Russia and Russia to be very much afraid of Germany. But there is a large belt of country which lies between them—Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia. If Germany undertook to respect her Eastern frontier and Russia to respect her Western frontier, and if these undertakings were duly observed, the intermediate belt would not be disturbed on either side. If in addition to these guarantees (which are largely represented by non-aggression pacts already entered into by Germany or Russia), there were added a promise by Germany to come to the assistance of an intermediate country if attacked by Russia, and a promise by Russia to do the same if the intermediate country is attacked by Germany, then this would be a real contribution

<sup>3</sup> Not here printed: it was the same as Annex 1 to the third Anglo-German meeting in No. 651.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. No. 468 and No. 484, paragraphs 10 and 11.

to equal security. And it avoids what is now Germany's main objection, viz., that she will not consent to agree to fight side by side with Russia. There are probable objections which would be raised by various parties to this scheme, but it none the less might be worth putting forward as another effort on our part to finding a plan in which Germany would be included.

J. S.

ENCLOSURE IN No. 696

*Foreign Office Memorandum*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 4, 1935*

*I.—Introductory*

1. Before considering the questions which will arise at Stresa, it will be useful to note *the origin of the Conference*.

The London Communiqué of the 3rd February outlined the heads of a General Settlement to be 'freely negotiated between Germany and the other Powers.' The German Government agreed to discuss all these heads of a settlement; and with the approval of the French and Italian Governments it was decided on the 21st February that, as a first step, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Lord Privy Seal should visit Berlin for purposes of exploration. Then on the 16th March intervened the German decree respecting the reintroduction of conscription and the establishment of an armed strength of 36 divisions. His Majesty's Government protested to the German Government against this decree on the 18th March—a protest which was followed by French and Italian protests on the 21st March. But it was decided that the Berlin visit should still 'take place with the scope and for the purposes previously agreed.' Finally, on the 23rd March, the Lord Privy Seal visited Paris; and the following decision was taken at his meeting there with M. Laval and Signor Suvich:—

'It was decided that after the Berlin visit and the other British visits to Moscow, Warsaw and Prague, all of which are undertaken with the good wishes of the other two Governments, the British, French and Italian Foreign Ministers would meet at Stresa on the 11th April.'

*II.—Review of Berlin, Moscow, Warsaw and Prague Visits<sup>5</sup>*

2. *The first business at Stresa* will presumably be a review by the British representatives of the Berlin, Moscow, Warsaw and Prague visits. In this review the five questions included in the proposed General Settlement could be dealt with in the order followed at Berlin.

3. *Eastern Pact*.—The German document communicated to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the 26th March (Annex 1)<sup>3</sup> could be handed to the French and Italian representatives, who could also be told that:—

(a) Herr Hitler refuses to conclude a non-aggression treaty with Lithuania until she respects her obligations in regard to Memel;

<sup>5</sup> For the detailed records of these meetings see Nos. 651, 673, 689, and 693.

- (b) Germany refuses to undertake obligations of mutual assistance in Eastern Europe; and
- (c) Germany would object to an Eastern Pact to which she was a party being coupled with mutual assistance obligations between other signatories.

4. The following information obtained on this matter in Moscow and Warsaw could also be communicated:—

In Moscow M. Litvinoff said that he regarded mutual assistance as a deterrent. If Germany knew that she would find ranged against her a coalition of a number of States, she might hesitate to risk her fate. M. Litvinoff asked what would be the attitude of the British Government supposing the German Government were to continue to refuse to take part in any security pact; but Mr. Eden said that he must refer this matter to His Majesty's Government.<sup>6</sup>

In Warsaw M. Beck explained to Mr. Eden that Poland was not opposed to mutual assistance as such, as her policy was based upon good relations with her two great neighbours, and she would not therefore enter into any arrangement which was liable to endanger those relations with either. In reply to a question from Mr. Eden as to what would be his attitude if a multi-lateral pact of non-aggression were agreed to in Eastern Europe, and if some of the parties to this multilateral pact were to enter into arrangements between themselves for mutual assistance, M. Beck replied that he did not think he would have any serious objection on principle to such a procedure, provided that Poland's obligations towards her neighbours and the League of Nations were not thereby infringed.<sup>7</sup> M. Litvinoff informed Mr. Eden that M. Beck had recently said at Geneva that his only objection was that he could not enter the pact unless Germany did so.<sup>8</sup>

5. *Austria*.—The French and Italian representatives could be given the general sense of Herr Hitler's observations, viz., that:—

- (a) He is willing to conclude a bilateral pact of non-aggression with Austria;
- (b) He does not, so far as Germany is concerned, see the necessity of a non-intervention agreement; Germany is not interested in Austria; but other Powers appear to be interested; if they want a non-intervention agreement it is for them to submit to the German Government a more precise proposal than that so far outlined by France and Italy.

6. *Germany's return to the League of Nations*.—The French and Italian representatives could be told that Herr Hitler indicated that the separation of the Covenant from the Treaty of Versailles would have a certain technical importance in facilitating the return of Germany to the League; but that the real obstacle was the 'inferiority' of Germany; and that for this to be remedied some attribution of colonial possessions to Germany would be necessary. He referred to his speech of May 1933, in which he said: 'We could not remain in the League as a permanently stigmatised people.' Herr Hitler indicated that the position for Germany would be impossible if Japan, who was not a

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 673, pp. 778–81.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. No. 684.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. No. 673, p. 778.

member of the League, had former German colonies while Germany, having returned to the League, had no colonies: Herr Hitler mentioned also the ex-German colonies held under mandate by France and Great Britain.

7. *Armaments*.—The French and Italian Governments could be informed that:—

*At sea* Germany claims 35 per cent. of the British fleet, but parity with France.

(N.B.—It should be pointed out that these two claims are inconsistent. There is a divergence between them of 272,000 tons; 35 per cent. of the British fleet amounting to 395,000 tons, and the French tonnage amounting to 667,000 tons.)

It has been agreed with the German Government that an informal exchange of views shall take place in London between British and German Government representatives in order to prepare for a Naval Conference, which should aim at arriving, if possible, at a new naval agreement in the future. It was pointed out to the German Government that this exchange of views must take place under full reservation of the fact that German naval armaments are at present regulated by the Treaty of Versailles.

(N.B.—It should be explained that if the figures which would result from the ratios at present contemplated by the Germans are maintained, any measure of agreement will almost certainly be impossible; the figure which we had contemplated for the German fleet was some 178,000 tons in place of the 108,000 laid down by the Treaty.)

*On land* Herr Hitler has explained that the 36 divisions will be equivalent to a strength of 550,000 men, recruited on a basis of one year's service (with the exception of police and technical troops, who will serve for longer periods); that the S.S. and Police will be included in this strength; Herr Hitler refused to recognise that there were any para-military organisations in Germany, or that the Labour Service must be taken into consideration; Herr Hitler claimed that this strength was roughly equivalent to the strength of the French military forces in metropolitan France and North Africa, which he estimated at 500,000 men; he would accept international control and limitation of war material if other Powers did the same; the tables of military strengths<sup>9</sup> given by Herr Hitler might also be communicated.

*In the air* Germany claimed parity with the French first-line strength in metropolitan France and North Africa; and was anxious that that should also be the first-line United Kingdom strength; further, Herr Hitler has stated that Germany has already attained parity with Great Britain in the air. It might be useful also to give the tables of air strengths<sup>9</sup> communicated by Herr Hitler.

8. *Air Pact*.—The French and Italian representatives could be informed that Herr Hitler favoured the early conclusion of an Air Pact between the Locarno Powers and that he deprecated making the conclusion of that Pact dependent upon the negotiation of a General Settlement.

<sup>9</sup> *Note in original*: 'These tables have been checked by the War Office and Air Ministry, and their comments appear as Annexes 3 and 4 [not printed].'

### III.—*Discussions at Stresa as regards the Future*

9. When this general review of the Berlin, Warsaw, Moscow and Prague visits has been given, it is recommended that the British representatives should leave the French and Italian representatives to make their observations. At any rate, until the French and Italian views are known, it would scarcely be possible for us to make any further statement on the Eastern Pact or as regards Austria. (But see below: paragraphs 18 and 19, and 21.)

10. As regards *the return of Germany to the League*, the French view is set out in the French memorandum of the 23rd March (Annex 2):—

‘It would be disastrous if a sudden return of Germany to Geneva were contemplated, and if it were considered that her return would settle all questions.’

There certainly seems little prospect of Germany’s early return. As well as France, Italy and Russia also would certainly say that if Germany returns to the League at the present moment after having broken, with impunity, her treaty obligations, that would only be a proof that the League, which exists for the defence of treaties, is a complete unreality. The return of Germany to the League in such conditions would only weaken the League.

11. As regards *armaments*, it will be well first to hear what the French and Italian representatives have to say; but there are certain points which we must bear in mind:—

- (1) Whilst we have agreed to have a preliminary and unofficial conversation with the Germans on naval strengths, we must remember that at sea the Germans have not yet repudiated their treaty obligations as they have in the case of land and air. We must find out if the French consider that there are elements of a settlement as regards military effectives on the basis of the German claim to a peace-strength of 550,000 men, including S.S. police troops and Landwehr; whilst denying that there are any para-military formations or that the Labour Service should be taken into account, and claiming that that is equality with the French forces in France and North Africa on the ground that North Africa should be off-set against East Prussia.
- (2) Herr Hitler did say that he was prepared to agree to limitation of certain categories of weapons and to supervision, if other Powers would also agree; it might, therefore, be well to ascertain definitely the French and Italian views on these points, whatever their view on the question of effectives. (N.B.—The indications of the French view contained in the memorandum of the 23rd March (Annex 2) are not encouraging.)
- (3) As regards negotiations for the limitation of air armaments, the conditions are somewhat different from those affecting land armaments and are dealt with in connection with the air pact (see paragraph 13).
- (4) In the matter of armaments it must also be remembered that the French Government have already, in their protest to Germany against the decree of the 16th March, announced their intention *to refer the*

*matter of Germany's military rearmament to the League of Nations*; <sup>10</sup> and the French will ask our views on this point when the armaments question is discussed. In their memorandum of the 23rd March (Annex II), the French observed that 'it is inadmissible that a Treaty should be broken in such extraordinary circumstances without the breach being followed by some pronouncement from the League, whose whole policy is directed towards ensuring peace by the establishment between States of contractual relations. If the League of Nations did not affirm anew and more solemnly than it has yet done the principle of the sovereignty of treaties, its very existence would soon be in jeopardy.' In this memorandum the French added that they were considering a written communication to the Council, but that they would welcome the observations of the British and Italian Governments. It would seem impossible for us to oppose the French on this point. It might be wiser to endeavour to agree at Stresa on the exact terms of the resolution on this matter which would eventually be proposed at Geneva. This course of action would probably secure a less provocative resolution than if the drafting was left to Geneva, where M. Benes, M. Titulesco, &c., would be pressing for something violent in order to impress Hungary.

12. As regards the *Air Pact*, we have hitherto taken the line, in Cabinet and in the C.I.D., that we only propose such a pact as part of a general agreement covering the matters dealt with in the London communiqué. Since it is clear that Germany will not agree to join in an Eastern Pact of mutual assistance, it follows that if this is an essential part of the general settlement contemplated, no air pact *can* be concluded. Germany, it is true expresses a strong desire to negotiate and agree to the air pact, presumably without any agreed limitation of respective air forces. There are good reasons for thinking that France and Italy would be opposed to the separate and prior agreement on an air pact—France, for example, would probably feel that it was impossible to agree to this, which is a purely Western arrangement, while her friends and allies in the East of Europe got no agreement in which Germany shared. Italy would probably make a similar objection on the ground that the Austrian question remained unprovided for. It may therefore be only an academic exercise to consider whether this country would like the air pact to be carried through in the absence of other collateral agreements with Germany. It would be something done; it is a proposal which has been warmly welcomed by public opinion; it provides a specific promise by France of help to this country. But to secure it as an isolated conclusion would be contrary to previous Government intentions, and, in any case, seems an unattainable object.

13. There is a conceivable middle course, which would be to negotiate the terms of such a pact up to the point of a draft, but not to put the agreement into operation until other results are secured. This was, indeed, at one time a suggestion of the French Foreign Office,<sup>11</sup> which no doubt thought that by

<sup>10</sup> Cf. No. 629.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. No. 442.

this means an Anglo-French understanding might be reached as to how we would behave in support of one another in the event of German air attack on either of us. With this in mind, it seems possible that the ground might be explored at Stresa to find out whether the French still take this view and whether interchanges between the Locarno Powers with a view to formulating the scheme more precisely are possible and desirable. But it may be anticipated that, in any event, the obstacle will be the absence of agreement limiting the size of the respective air forces. And Germany will probably go on saying that Russia's development in the air is more and more serious, so that no limiting figure for Germany can be finally agreed. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that Mr. Baldwin in a House of Commons debate on the 8th March, 1934, declared that, if all other efforts at the agreed limitation of armaments failed, we were determined the next morning to 'start work to get an air convention alone among the countries of Western Europe.'<sup>12</sup>

14. We have had warning that, at Stresa, M. Laval will ask us and Italy to consider in advance the situation that would arise in the event of a violation of the *demilitarised zone* by Germany. M. Laval told Mr. Eden on the 23rd March<sup>13</sup> that: 'If the idea should get abroad that Great Britain and Italy would be indifferent in the event of a violation of the demilitarised zone, it would not be long before a violation took place. The Germans would find some pretext or other . . .<sup>14</sup> for committing some new act of unilateral violation.' We must, therefore, have some clear ideas on this subject before we go to Stresa; and we must know how we are going to deal with the questions which the French will ask us about it.

15. Stated in the simplest terms, our obligations under Locarno in respect of the demilitarised zone are as follows:—

If France alleges that Germany is committing a breach of article 42 or 43 of the Treaty of Versailles (no fortifications to be constructed on the left bank of the Rhine or within 50 kilometres of its right bank, and no armed forces to be assembled in the area) France may bring the question before the Council of the League.

As soon as the Council is satisfied that such breach has been committed, the Council will notify Belgium, Italy and the United Kingdom and we have severally agreed that in such case we will 'come immediately to the assistance of' France. The nature of the assistance is not defined.

The decision of the Council that a breach has been committed would require our assent, and therefore we could decline to agree if we considered the facts were not sufficiently proved. But we could not contemplate voting in the negative merely to avoid our clear responsibilities.

The above is the ordinary procedure of Locarno, but there is also the case of 'a flagrant breach of Article 42 or 43' by Germany ('flagrant' is not defined, but presumably means serious and deliberate, as opposed to trifling

<sup>12</sup> See 286 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 2077.

<sup>13</sup> See No. 642.

<sup>14</sup> Punctuation as in the original quotation.

or accidental). In this case, the use of the machinery of the League of Nations is not a condition preceding action. Providing that the United Kingdom has been able to satisfy itself that, by reason of the assembly of armed forces in the demilitarised zone immediate action is necessary, the United Kingdom undertakes immediately to come to the help of France. There is again no definition of the method. The consideration of the matter by the Council of the League will take place later on, as provided in the first place.

All the above propositions equally apply if Belgium is substituted for France as the complaining party.

16. M. Laval's question to us is therefore likely to be an invitation to define more strictly what is the kind of action which we will take—

- (1) if the Council of the League notifies to us its decision that there has been a breach by Germany of Article 42 or 43; and
- (2) if France alleges a flagrant breach of Article 42 or 43.

In the latter case, what is the 'immediate action' which we would take and what are the circumstances in which we should regard such action as 'necessary'?

17. It seems to me that the general line which we should follow at Stresa on this matter is as follows:—

- (1) Any declaration which we make should be made jointly with Italy. Our obligations under Locarno exactly correspond.
- (2) We should be prepared, with Italy, to make a public declaration that we regard the Locarno Treaty as a binding obligation which we intend to discharge according to its terms.
- (3) I should prefer not to make a specific declaration about the 'demilitarised zone,' though this would be included in the general reference. It would be better to speak of the obligations of the Treaty as a whole instead of picking out one set of obligations to the exclusion of others.
- (4) We should avoid making any public declaration or giving any private assurance which defines exactly what we would do in a particular hypothetical case. Indeed, we should endeavour to avoid being drawn into any such discussion and should suggest that our firm public statement that we mean the Treaty to be duly observed is much more effective from every point of view than going into hypothetical details. If the French persist, it may be necessary to point out that French public opinion is likely to judge very differently a minor infraction like a small fortification from a major infraction like the mobilisation of large forces in the demilitarised zone. But it is surely most undesirable to be drawn into the discussion of these distinctions.
- (5) We should remember throughout, and remind the French, that the main purpose of any pronouncement about the sanctity of Locarno at Stresa is to give the Germans notice that, though they may have disregarded Treaty obligations about armaments, they had better be warned against disregarding Locarno.



18. A summary of the various proposals made since last summer for an *Eastern Pact* appears as Annex 5.<sup>15</sup> The latest development is that M. Litvinoff asked Mr. Eden on the 29th March 'what would be the attitude of Great Britain supposing the German Government were to continue to refuse to take part in any security pact and the other parties went on alone to conclude such security agreements as they could.' Mr. Eden asked for time to consider the question, though he stated that his own personal impression was that there was not likely to be any objection to such a course as M. Litvinoff had in mind, provided first that the security agreements in question were under the auspices of the League and, secondly, that they were open to accession by other States.<sup>16</sup>

19. The line we should take up at Stresa in reply to any French enquiry as to our attitude towards the form of Eastern Pact which France and Russia will now want to negotiate should be as follows:—

- (1) We should recall the part we played last July in modifying the Barthou proposal, and in expressing our approval of that idea.
- (2) We should express our grave concern that neither Germany nor Poland seems prepared to join in the Pact, and our satisfaction that the Pact would be so drawn as to enable them to join it.
- (3) We should repeat that it is well understood that the United Kingdom cannot undertake new responsibilities in respect of the Pact.
- (4) But we should add that as firm supporters of all practical methods for collective security, and as faithful Members of the League of Nations, we should be prepared to accept the carrying through of such an arrangement in the absence of a more complete agreement, provided that it is entered into *through and under the auspices of the League of Nations*.
- (5) We should call the attention of the French and Italian representatives to the German document (Annex 1)<sup>17</sup> and do justice to what it contains (though it will be regarded as insufficient), remembering that the German Government are presenting this suggestion in their reply to France.

20. One matter to be borne in mind is that we must not express approval of any new engagements on the part of France in such terms as will increase our obligations under Locarno. Locarno already contains provisions which secure that the French treaties with Czechoslovakia and Poland cannot bring upon us obligations under Locarno to come to the assistance of either France or Germany merely because France goes to the assistance of her ally when attacked, and after an attack by France on Germany, Germany invades France. Something of the same sort will be necessary if France makes new agreements with Russia; otherwise we shall be accused of having extended our contractual commitments under Locarno. *This is not, of course, to say that if trouble in Europe arises from German aggression on the East which brings France in, with the result that Germany then invades France, we may not have to take part on the ground of our vital interests. But if we do take part it will be because we*

<sup>15</sup> Not printed.

<sup>16</sup> See No. 673, pp. 784-5.

<sup>17</sup> See note 3 above.

*judge our vital interests to be gravely affected and not because the Treaty of Locarno requires us to do so.*

21. As regards *Austria*, we may expect at Stresa that France and Italy will indicate that they wish actively to promote a pact, or pacts, on the lines already outlined at Rome (Annex 6),<sup>18</sup> and approved in the London communiqué (Annex 6). The new fact is that Germany, during the Berlin visit, raised objections to joining in such a pact, alleging (1) that it was not necessary as far as Germany was concerned; and (2) that 'interference' was so vague a word that its application was next door to impossible.

Presumably the parties to the Austrian pact which France and Italy may now urge would be, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Austria, with the opportunity for the accession of the other limitrophe State, viz., Germany.

The Rome proposal also included provision for the possibility of the accession to the pact of France, Poland, and Roumania.

It will be remembered that in the early days of the year we objected to being named as a possible adherent and secured our exclusion from the list.

The object of the pact is to record the mutual promise of the signatories not to interfere in one another's internal affairs and not to foment or favour agitation or propaganda which aims at affecting the territorial or constitutional *status quo* in the other's country.

The Rome announcement further indicated the intention to negotiate 'separate agreements in order to ensure, with the co-operation of the League of Nations, the application of the principle' of non-interference as above defined.

What should be our attitude at Stresa when this Austrian question comes up, as it undoubtedly will? It seems to me that our line should be as follows:—

- (1) We should recall our previous declarations on the subject and confirm them, *i.e.*, that we cannot undertake special responsibilities of our own in the matter, but that we do regard the integrity and independence of Austria as an object of British policy and have already so declared.
- (2) That we continue to favour the pursuit of the Rome objective, as stated in the London communiqué.
- (3) We should emphasise our continued desire to see an Austrian arrangement in which Germany is a party, but should not discourage an arrangement without her if every effort to get her concurrence fails.
- (4) We should call attention to the difficulties raised by Germany on the ground of the vagueness of the expression 'interference,' and ask whether the authors of the plan have as yet found any more precise words.

<sup>18</sup> This Annex, not printed, contained copies of the following documents relating to Austria: (a) Anglo-French-Italian declaration of February 17, 1934 (see Volume VI, Nos. 288 and 290), (b) Anglo-French-Italian declaration of September 27, 1934 (see No. 124, note 1), (c) extract from the Anglo-French communiqué of February 3, 1935 (see No. 400, note 4 and Annex).

- (5) We should insist that anything that is done must be done under the auspices of the League of Nations and should not be an arrangement made between certain States without reference to Geneva. This last point is really covered by the terms of the Rome communiqué, but it will be for us to bring it out afresh and make much of it.
- (6) In these circumstances we should indicate that while we shall continue to do anything that can be done to get Germany included, we nevertheless feel that an Austrian pact, worked out in suitable terms and under the auspices of the League of Nations, is a contribution to collective security which we should approve.

22. *Rearmament of the Smaller Powers.*—The Italians have raised this question (Annex 7).<sup>19</sup> We clearly cannot legalize the rearmament of the lesser Powers until we have legalized that of Germany. In the meantime, we can only hope to be able to persuade the latter not to proceed to the unilateral repudiation which the Italian Government fear as likely to lead to trouble in Central Europe. As a matter of fact, there is probably a considerable element of bluff in the threats of the Little *Entente*, while, on the other hand, the Austrian, Bulgarian and Hungarian Governments have let it be understood that they do not intend to follow Germany's lead.<sup>20</sup>

J. S.

#### ANNEX 2 TO FOREIGN OFFICE MEMORANDUM

*Translation of Extracts from Notes prepared in the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs for Departmental Use and handed to Mr. Eden in Paris by M. Laval on March 23 with the Statement that it was not to be regarded as a Diplomatic Document*

. . . .<sup>21</sup> The dramatic gesture of the 16th March has eclipsed the memory of the interview given by General Göring on the creation of a German military air force. This is, nevertheless, a fact as grave as the other; it is evidence, moreover, of the same desire and the same method to create a *fait accompli* by means of preparations made under the greatest secrecy and when all is

<sup>19</sup> Not printed: it repeated the five points set out in No. 69r.

<sup>20</sup> At its afternoon meeting on April 8 the Cabinet discussed in detail the various proposals made in C.P. 79 (35), and agreed that at the Stresa Conference the representatives of the United Kingdom should be the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. On the Eastern Pact, the Austrian Question, the demilitarized Zone, and the Air Pact it was agreed that the attitude of the representatives should be in accordance with the relevant passages of C.P. 79 (35). The following two recommendations were also included: '(h) *Re-armament of the Smaller Powers.* That when the question of legalising the re-armament of the lesser Powers was raised, the United Kingdom Delegates should point out that the Treaty of St. Germain and the Peace Treaties regulating the armaments of other former enemies involve a number of other nations that will not be represented at Stresa. (i) *The Meeting of the Council at Geneva.* That pending the Stresa Conference it was impossible to foresee what the situation would be when the Council of the League of Nations met at Geneva, but that our general aim should be peace achieved by some system of collective security under the League of Nations, without acceptance of new commitments.'

<sup>21</sup> Punctuation here, and throughout this Annex, is as in the filed extracts.

ready to pass brutally to open action. The signatories of the treaties have now before them the last opportunity of showing Germany that this method leads nowhere.

Hitler's gesture has not only the effect of revealing the extent of the actual rearmament of the Reich and of making possible an appreciation of the importance of the danger presented by Germany; but it obliges the Powers to take up their position on the doctrine of the *fait accompli* and the method of unilateral denunciation of treaties. If they do not show an absolute degree of firmness, if it is possible for one country or another to free itself from existing obligations at will without having to suffer the consequences of such a gesture, this means the ruin of all the efforts made over a period of years in order to arrive at an organisation of European peace. The British Government, which neglects no opportunity of extolling the collective system of security, is therefore interested more than any other in an energetic correction of the present situation. . . .

The German plan is simple: Germany, by her gesture of 16th March, has fixed unilaterally the level of her effectives, and she intends that there should be no discussion on this point; she may, perhaps, be willing to agree to a reduction of the number of divisions she has announced, several of which have not yet been created (for this is a conception which does not correspond to any precise effectives figure). But it does not seem probable that she is disposed to make any concessions on the actual total of effectives.

On the other hand, Germany may still have some interest at the present moment in a certain limitation of material. In actual fact, she has not yet had the time to reconstitute her stocks of several categories of heavy war material; she may, therefore, be disposed to suggest that new consideration may be given to the MacDonald Plan, that is to say a limitation of calibre and maximum weight of artillery and fighting vehicles, while all war material over and above these limits should be destroyed.

Mr. Eden should be warned against the temptation which might be experienced on the English side of entering into a system of this sort, not only because the French and Italian Governments lay it down in principle that no international negotiation may proceed from the basis of a *fait accompli*, but also because such negotiation would, in fact, lead to a position of absurdity. Since 1933, the British Government has recognised that it would be reasonable to ask sacrifices of France in the domain of war material, in which she has still a certain degree of superiority which may make some small contribution towards compensating her for the permanent inferiority which the proportion between the respective figures of population of Germany and France must impose upon her.

Since October 1933 the situation has only gone from bad to worse, and the margin of superiority on which France can still count has grown materially smaller. Now that it is more than ever reasonable to doubt German intentions, is it reasonable to let the Germans even hope that it would be possible to continue in this way? It is clear that the French Government cannot consider any destruction; but that would not in any case hinder them from

contemplating qualitative limitation for future construction on condition, of course, that very strict control was exercised over manufacture. . . .

### *Return of Germany to the League of Nations*

The return of Germany to the League of Nations is an essential part of the programme of the 3rd February, but it is only a part. In particular, it would be disastrous if a sudden return of Germany to Geneva were contemplated, and if it were considered that her return would settle all questions. Any German manoeuvre in this sense which may develop must immediately be discouraged. . . .

It is inadmissible from a political point of view that a country should leave Geneva and slam the doors in doing so, and that subsequently for a year and a half it should indulge in wholesale criticism of the institution which it has just left; that it should act without taking the League into account, and without recognising international law; and that, finally, having torn up the international engagements which it had entered into, it should claim the right to return to Geneva without that return forming the subject of any discussion.

Theoretically, Germany, as a member of the League of Nations, can resume her place in it at any moment, but if she does so she must expect to be asked to give an account of her conduct and of the violation of her international engagements.

In reality, therefore, the question resolves itself as follows: Is it better that Germany should first of all return to Geneva at the risk of a discussion arising there when she would be put in the dock, and which might lead her to withdraw brusquely once again? Or, on the other hand, is it better that after all questions have been settled and all agreements reached, the return of Germany to the League should lay the seal on a *détente* in international relations and the organisation of a system of collective security, and be thereafter approved without reserve by all the members of the League? What is in any case impossible is that Germany by a mere gesture should, without granting anything in return, obtain any advantages in the sphere of armaments. It is equally impossible to contemplate that encouragement should be given to the method of withdrawing from and then returning to the League by the fact that Germany might have obtained benefits from it.

Finally, it is the essence of the Agreement of the 3rd February that a link should be established between the return of Germany and the settlement of the complex of questions apropos of which she left the League.

### *Possible new German Demands—Demilitarized Zone*

Up to the present there has been no lack on the part of Germany of declarations tending to affirm that the demilitarized Zone will be respected; but what is the value of these protestations? Is it not possible that there will be one day soon a *fait accompli* in this sphere? Besides the situation is modified by the very fact that the police is now incorporated in a military organisation. It is true that the Germans protest that the police in the Rhineland will

not be incorporated in the new organisations, but it is impossible to place much faith in the value of such a declaration. The violation of the treaty provisions affecting the left bank of the Rhine would be an extremely grave matter. It is necessary that if such a violation should occur the reply to it should be immediate. It is therefore, from this point of view, most desirable that the Powers should not be taken by surprise by such an event and that they should be clear in advance how they would react in such circumstances.

This question should from now on be the object of study by the interested Governments so that it may be discussed during the forthcoming Franco-Anglo-Italian meeting. From now on the point of view of France is that, if the event should occur, it would be impossible to stop at a simple protest, and that the procedure laid [?down] by the Treaty of Locarno ought immediately to be resorted to. . . .

*French Appeal to Geneva*

It is inadmissible that a Treaty should be broken in such extraordinary circumstances without the breach being followed by some pronouncement from the League, whose whole policy is directed towards ensuring peace by the establishment between States of contractual relations. If the League of Nations did not affirm anew and more solemnly than it has yet done the principle of the sovereignty of treaties, its very existence would soon be in jeopardy.

Moreover, it is, unfortunately, impossible to exclude the hypothesis that the situation might develop in a far more serious manner. If the situation should develop in this way, it would be fortunate if the Western Powers could point to a formal declaration of the Council of the League recognising that Germany was in the wrong.

Finally, it might be added that, if the French Government reserves the right to address a memorandum to the Council in support of its appeal, it has not yet decided upon the exact content, and will accordingly welcome any suggestions which may be offered by Great Britain or Italy. . . .

**No. 697**

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 8)*

*No. 547 [C 2928/55/18]*

PARIS, April 5, 1935

Sir,

On the eve of the Stresa meeting you may wish to receive an appreciation of the state of mind in this country in the face of the German menace and some estimate of the attitude likely to be adopted by the French delegation during the impending discussions.

2. Outwardly the general public is less excited to-day than it has been on occasions when the cause was far less; the man in the street goes about his daily business with every semblance of calm. This is due partly to the re-

straint exercised by the press, partly to the very gravity of the situation and partly to a sort of fatalism derived from the feeling that the issue of peace and war has almost passed beyond human control. This appearance is wholly deceptive; at no time since the war has there been anything comparable to the anxiety now prevailing in virtually all classes of the population.

3. Until recently the consensus of opinion in informed circles was that Herr Hitler's aim was to bring German armaments up to the pitch that would enable him to impose his will on Europe and realise his ambitions, step by step, without the necessity of fighting for them. It is now widely believed that, true to 'Mein Kampf', he is deliberately, remorselessly, preparing a war of revenge. Side by side with this belief exists the uneasy feeling—to a large extent justified—that France, lulled by the hope that sooner or later a composition with Germany would be reached, has seriously neglected her armaments. The French air force, in process of transformation, is notoriously deficient in quality if not in quantity; whilst, as regards effectives, France could put tomorrow little more than 350,000 men into the field against some 650,000 admitted to by Germany (the latest calculation made two days ago by the Committee of National Defence is 800,000). This alarming outlook is aggravated by the reports which come in to the effect that Herr Hitler is falling more and more under the influence of Herr Goering, who controls the air force and is thought to be sufficiently fanatical and unbalanced to risk everything on the success of a sudden stroke. There are to-day many responsible Frenchmen, not usually prone to scaremongering, who believe that we may wake up any morning to learn that a surprise attack has been launched overnight on whatever quarter is thought to be the most promising objective (Czechoslovakia is the most frequently mentioned).

4. Whatever be the justification for this state of alarm, it exists. The Government itself has succumbed to it, though, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the view most prevalent among Ministers, as well as the General Staff, is that the danger of an early surprise attack is comparatively remote. They consider it more probable that the Reichswehr policy will prevail, and that no move likely to embroil Germany in war will be made until the plans are complete. According to its latest calculation, based on the intensified acceleration of the German preparations, the General Staff now believes that this state will be reached at latest by next spring; it had previously put it at 1938.

5. In the days following the announcement of the Constitution of a German air force and of the return to conscription, the French Government was violently attacked for its inertia. Under the pressure of public opinion, and of its own growing convictions, it is now embarked on a policy of firmness. The decision to refer the German breaches of the Treaty of Versailles to the Council of the League is being followed up by a series of military measures (involving heavy additional credits) designed to speed up the supply of modern material (tanks, anti-tank machine guns, etc.) and to strengthen the frontier fortifications (construction of wire entanglements and of concrete pill-boxes in the spaces between the main works). Tomorrow the

Cabinet will probably decide on the retention with the colours of the half-year contingent due for release on April 13th for a further period, probably of four months, by which time the half-year contingent joining on April 15th will be considered to be trained. The substantial majority secured by M. Flandin, notwithstanding his unpopularity in the Chamber, when he put the vote of confidence before closing the session,<sup>1</sup> was due to his frank admission of the danger and the resolute manner in which he undertook to meet it.

6. I have described all this at some length as it affords the clue to the attitude which will be adopted by the French delegation at Stresa. After learning through M. Corbin the summarised account of the Berlin visit,<sup>2</sup> the French Government has made up its mind that the time for seeking a general settlement with Germany is passed. It considers that in the light of Herr Hitler's claims no possible basis for any such settlement exists, and that any further attempt to find one could have no other result than to encourage Germany to go yet further in tearing up her treaty engagements. The ever-increasing faith of the German people in the Leader rests on the fact that he has never been checked. Each act of defiance has been allowed to pass with impunity, with the result that the nation has implicit belief that his method is the right one. Any wavering now by the Western Powers, any indication of a desire to seek fresh formulas, would inevitably stimulate Herr Hitler to speed up his programme of unilateral action. But the French Government does not believe that a firm policy, designed to show Germany that her present tactics must lead to her total isolation, will drive Herr Hitler to some fresh act of folly. It thinks that he is subtle enough to draw in his horns at the first sign of failure and adapt his policy to the altered circumstances.

7. M. Laval will consequently show no inclination at Stresa to seek any fresh basis of a general settlement with Germany. He will urge that no time be wasted on so fruitless a quest, and that the three Powers proceed at once with the attempt to organise security on a collective basis. His ideas in this respect do not seem to have taken any definite shape. Roughly, they appear to be as follows:

*Eastern Pact.* As Germany has signified that in no circumstances will she be a party to any form of mutual assistance, it becomes impossible for France and Russia to devise, as part of a regional pact, any form of mutual guarantee that would not appear to be directed, and would not in fact be directed, against Germany. An effort will therefore be made to contrive some general system of security, possibly by rendering more precise both the *casus foederis* under article 10 of the Covenant and the nature of the steps to be taken under articles 15 and 16. While it is hoped to persuade as many states as possible to join eventually in some arrangement of this kind, which would be directed against any disturber of the peace, and against none in particular, a beginning may have to be made by France and Russia, who, in that case, would subscribe to it in the shape of a bilateral engagement. The exact form will depend on the result of the discussions at Stresa, though it is practically certain that M. Laval will not leave Moscow without putting his signature

<sup>1</sup> On April 2.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 679.



to a document of one sort or another. (See my despatch No. 493<sup>3</sup> of March 28).

*Central European Pact.* M. Laval will propose that the elaboration of this instrument be undertaken without further delay. Signor Mussolini is agreed, but insists at the same time on something more precise and more drastic—presumably some engagement between France and Italy for mutual assistance in the event of a German descent upon Austria, though whether other states such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia would be invited to participate is not clear.

*Air Pact.* M. Laval will propose that the Powers which are willing to do so should contract the obligation at once among themselves. His idea still seems to be that the instrument might remain open to Germany's accession if and when a general armaments convention is negotiated. As there is at present no prospect of that, it is desirable, in order that Germany shall have no pretext to complain that the Locarno basis has been altered to her detriment, that the instrument should specify clearly that it applies only to those cases in which immediate assistance is provided for under the Treaty of Locarno. It might be accompanied by some re-affirmation of Locarno.

*League of Nations.* As Germany has made her return to the League subject to wholly unacceptable conditions, this question does not arise.

8. I fear the above description is somewhat nebulous. Possibly M. Corbin, who I understand has received instructions to give you some account of M. Laval's views, may have been in a position to be more precise.

9. M. Laval will not however be content with proposing that the elaboration of the various security schemes enumerated in the London communiqué of February 3rd be pursued, with or without Germany's collaboration, on some such lines as those described above. He will urge that in the face of Germany's attitude it is essential that the three Powers should come to an immediate understanding between themselves as to the action which they will take in the event of specified further infractions by Germany of her treaty obligations. What will be done, for instance, in the event of a German assault on the integrity of Austria or of the violation of clauses relating to the demilitarised zone? What will be done in the event of a *coup de main* against Memel or Danzig? All these, and other, contingencies should be clearly defined and agreement reached on the action to be taken in each case. (The Polish corridor is not included as the question is held to have been settled, for the space at least of ten years, by the arrangement concluded by Germany and Poland at the beginning of last year). Signor Mussolini is stated to be desirous of going even further than M. Laval in this part of the programme.

10. It is understood that Great Britain cannot be expected to take so active a part as France and Italy in regions where they are more directly concerned, but His Majesty's Government will be invited to state formally the nature of the action which they will take in the case of violations of the demilitarised zone.

<sup>3</sup> No. 663.

11. The above proposals represent in a general way the official attitude. If M. Laval has in fact adopted them whole-heartedly it can only be because he is convinced that nothing but a show of firmness will bring Germany to reason. He remains by personal inclination a strong partisan of a settlement on reasonable conditions. At the first sign of a possible basis of agreement he will be among the first of his countrymen to wish to explore it.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE R. CLERK

**No. 698**

*Letter from the Air Ministry to the Foreign Office*

[C 2881/55/18]

LONDON, April 5, 1935

Sir,

I am commanded by the Air Council to refer to Mr. Wigram's letter (C. 2580/55/18)<sup>1</sup> of the 1st instant, on the subject of the conversations in Berlin on March 25th and 26th.

2. As to the German Chancellor's statement that Germany has attained parity in the air with Great Britain, there is obviously considerable doubt as to the basis of British air strength on which he claims that parity has been reached by Germany.

3. Herr Hitler may have had in mind (1) the figure of 1,045 first line aircraft, at which he estimated our strength (page 24 of the Notes).<sup>2</sup> This figure approximates to our actual first line strength at Home and Abroad plus non-regular squadrons. Alternatively, (2) Herr Hitler may have been referring to the figure of 690 first line aircraft given by Sir John Simon during the conversations. It is presumed that this figure was intended to represent the *metropolitan* first line strength, but the Council would observe that it includes a portion (110 aircraft) of the Fleet Air Arm and 127 aircraft in auxiliary units. The former are provided for the needs of the Navy and there is no assurance that they would even be in home waters in an emergency, while the 127 aircraft in auxiliary units correspond to 'Territorial' and not to regular forces. The present number of first line aircraft in regular units stationed at Home is 453 aircraft.

4. The last possibility (3) is that Herr Hitler was claiming to have reached parity with a figure of 2,100 which, according to his estimate (page 24 of Notes) represents British first line air strength 'including reserves'. The basis of this estimate cannot be identified by the Air Ministry but, so far as the admittedly incomplete information at the disposal of the Department goes,

<sup>1</sup> Not printed: it asked for observations on Herr Hitler's statement during the Anglo-German conversations in Berlin (see No. 651) as to German air strength and the strength of the air forces of her most important neighbours. A similar request concerning relative Army strengths was addressed to the War Office.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., p. 735 above.

it may be said that the total number of Service type aircraft possessed by Germany in first line, immediate reserve, and in Training Units, is not believed at present to exceed 1,320, though this does not include some 200 civil aircraft of types readily convertible to military use. The Council are inclined to conclude that the German Chancellor either deliberately overstated the *present* strength of the German Air Force or that he was speaking without accurate knowledge. In this connection the enclosed copy of a recent report to H.M. Ambassador at Berlin from the Air Attaché<sup>3</sup> is of interest.

5. In regard to the strength of the Air Forces of the most important of Germany's neighbours, as communicated by Herr Hitler, the Council consider that these are also considerably over-estimated. This is particularly so in the case of the figures of first line plus reserve given for each country. A comparison between these estimates, the figures published in the League of Nations Armaments Year Book, 1934, and the latest information derived from secret sources, is contained in the annexure.<sup>4</sup>

6. The first line strength of the French Air Force in Metropolitan France and North Africa, is 1,404. This figure is composed as follows:—

Air Force Units in France	1,042
Autonomous Naval Air Force in France	28
Shore based Naval Air Service in France	84
	<hr/>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,154</b>
 Air Force Units in North Africa	 172
Autonomous Naval Air Force in North Africa	27
Shore based Naval Air Service in North Africa	51
	<hr/>
<b>Metropolitan Air Force GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b><u>1,404</u></b>

7. With regard to paragraph 4, the Air Council offer the following observations. Careful preparations have been made in Germany to organize her aircraft and aero-engine industry for mass production methods. Immense efforts have been made to ensure that the industry can change from a peace to a war footing with the minimum delay. These preparations imply that Germany might accept a lower peace-time figure for her air force than would be the case if her aircraft industry was not so highly organized; since by changing from peace to war production without delay she can make good her initial losses in a much shorter space of time than can countries whose industry is less well organized. In effect, this means that Germany, after the first clash and consequent losses, would be in a stronger position than her opponents during the period in which they were organizing their aircraft industry to meet war wastage.

8. The Air Council would also refer to the references to air bombing contained on pages 20 and 21 of the Note of the conversations.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See enclosure in No. 687.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 651, pp. 743-4.

They appreciate that Herr Hitler's references to the desirability of protection of non-combatants from the risk of indiscriminate bombing are in entire accord with the declared policy of His Majesty's Government and they assume that the reference by Secretary Sir John Simon to that matter was intended to endorse Herr Hitler's views, but not in any way to imply that His Majesty's Government considered practicable the complete prohibition of air bombardment even against military objectives.

I am, &c.,  
C. L. BULLOCK<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Sir C. L. Bullock was Secretary of the Air Ministry.

**No. 699**

*Mr. Preston<sup>1</sup> (Kovno) to Mr. Torr<sup>2</sup> (Riga)*  
*No. 5<sup>3</sup> Telegraphic [C 2912/55/18]*

KOVNO, April 6, 1935

Latvian Minister informs me Soviet representative made preliminary démarche here today to the Lithuanian Government inviting its views on conclusion of Pact of Mutual Assistance by Russia, France, Czechoslovakia and the three Baltic States but excluding Germany and Poland.

He added that he had succeeded in extracting promise from Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs that Lithuania would do nothing without first of all consulting and obtaining consent of the other Baltic States.<sup>4</sup>

Repeated to Foreign Office, Berlin and Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. T. H. Preston was acting H.M. Chargé d'Affaires at Kovno.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. C. J. W. Torr was acting H.M. Chargé d'Affaires at Riga.

<sup>3</sup> Repeated as telegram No. 24 to the Foreign Office at 8.35 p.m. on April 6, received 10 p.m.

<sup>4</sup> In telegram No. 19 of April 7 to the Foreign Office from Riga, Mr. Torr reported that on April 6 he had been informed by the Latvian Chef de Cabinet 'that Russia had invited Baltic States to join an "Eastern Pact" without Germany but including (I understand) France and Czechoslovakia'.

**No. 700**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 8)*  
*No. 34<sup>1</sup> [C 2949/55/18]*

BERLIN, April 6, 1935

Sir,

In my despatch No. 127 of January 31st, 1934,<sup>1</sup> I had the honour to submit my views as to the position and the future trend of German foreign policy.

<sup>1</sup> Volume VI, No. 241.

This year in my despatch No. 60<sup>2</sup> of January 22nd I drew attention to the far-reaching effect on German policy of the result of the Saar plebiscite. It may be of some assistance if I now send you some reflections on the recent Berlin meeting<sup>3</sup> in so far as it throws light on German aims.

2. The racial doctrine of the Nazi party lays down that an admixture of foreign blood is disastrous to the health of a nation. The conquest of foreign territory, far from being an advantage, is thus a positive disadvantage, and Herr Hitler is, I believe, sincere in declaring that no further territorial differences exist between France and Germany. An unprovoked attack on France would only be justified if Germany thereby obtained a free hand to realise her aims in Europe. Those aims have not, in my opinion, altered fundamentally since I wrote my despatch No. 127 of January 31st, 1934<sup>1</sup>. To take the points in the same order:—

3. Herr Hitler's statement to you on the Austrian question appears to me to sum up very frankly the German point of view. Rightly or wrongly, he is convinced, especially since the Saar plebiscite, that a free vote in Austria would result in a Nazi triumph and that only foreign support keeps the present minority régime in power in Vienna. If this be so, it may seem curious that he should view with disfavour the proposed pact of non-intervention in Austria. The true explanation is, I think, the one he gave himself, namely that no formula has been devised which in his opinion will effectively put a stop to foreign and particularly Italian intervention. In these circumstances Germany has nothing to gain by tying her hands. Were it possible to assure Herr Hitler that the effect of the pact would be to deprive Herr Schuschnigg of all foreign support, Germany's signature would probably be forthcoming, because he would then be confident that Austria would inevitably become National Socialist in a short time. In the meantime propaganda, somewhat disingenuously described by Herr Hitler as carried out privately, will continue to pave the way for the day when Austria will be able freely to express her will. For the moment military pressure is unnecessary, since the German Government are satisfied that their aims in Austria will be realised by the spontaneous action of the Austrian people. If this hope prove illusory, it will be time to think eventually of more violent methods, when German rearmament is sufficiently advanced to permit of their application.

4. If Herr Hitler made his position vis-à-vis of France and Austria clear, the same cannot be said of his intentions in the East, except in so far as German participation in the Eastern Pact is concerned. Whereas he declared that he had solemnly given up all claim to Alsace-Lorraine, he would not go further in the general question of Germany's territorial aims than to say that it was difficult to modify the territorial status of Europe unless Germany were ready to face the danger of the whole structure tumbling. The fact is that the revision of the Eastern frontier is on a special footing for the reason that the territory which Germany intends eventually to recover there is alleged to be inhabited by Germans. It was, Herr Hitler holds, shamefully torn away from Germany under the peace treaty and its recovery would

<sup>2</sup> No. 361.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 651.

not be an annexation; nor would it be open to racial objections. Exactly how German aims in the East are to be realised may not be quite clear to Herr Hitler himself. Hence probably the obscurity of his language regarding prospects in the East. He opens by saying that in the absence of a common frontier there would be no war between Germany and Russia, and that Poland was protected for another eight or nine years by her non-aggression pact with Russia. Other pacts, he said, limited the real possibilities of conflict in those regions of Europe; moreover, he could give an assurance that Germany would never declare war on Russia. He then proceeded to dwell on the peril to Germany and Europe generally of Russia's aggressive designs.

5. If any conclusion can be reached from Herr Hitler's remarks it is probably that he does not anticipate or desire a conflict with Russia in the near future. He is therefore willing to sign a pact of non-aggression with Russia. When this pact expires together with the Polish agreement, Germany will perhaps be in a better position to judge whether to pursue her Eastern aims in agreement with Poland at the expense of Russia and possibly Czechoslovakia or at the expense of Poland with or without the complicity of Russia. In the meantime the Russian bogey is a useful card to play, both to justify German armaments and to mobilise European opinion against Russia.

6. In my despatch No. 60<sup>2</sup> of January 22nd, 1935, I anticipated that the German claim to equality would not be confined to armaments. The conversations have borne out this view. In particular, Herr Hitler has categorically declared that until the return of the German colonies Germany will remain in a condition of inferiority which will preclude her return to the League of Nations. It is interesting and instructive to note how rapidly the German attitude has changed under the influence of a consciousness of revising [*sic*] strength. Although of course German colonial aspirations were not denied, it was considered until very recently inopportune to raise this thorny question. In an interview in the 'Daily Mail' of August 6th last Herr Hitler declared: 'We want nothing from England . . .<sup>4</sup> I would not sacrifice the life of a single German to get any colony in the world. We know that the former German colonies are costly luxuries, even for England.'<sup>5</sup> On September 6th Herr Hess said that Germany would not reopen the colonial question<sup>6</sup> and so give her enemies the opportunity of inflaming foreign opinion. To-day foreign opinion is of less consequence and Germany, having helped herself in defiance of the world to military equality is not shy of suggesting that the colonial question should be settled in her favour as *one* of the conditions of her return to Geneva.

7. Herr Hitler's claims in the naval sphere are described by the 'Times' of April 4th as 'not exorbitant'. I cannot consider them to be moderate; but,

<sup>4</sup> Punctuation as in the original quotation.

<sup>5</sup> For this interview between Mr. Ward Price and Herr Hitler on August 5 see the *Daily Mail*, August 6, 1934, and *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, vol. ii, pp. 1181-4.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *The Times*, September 10, 1934, p. 12, where it is reported that Herr Hess referred to the former German colonies in a speech at the Nazi party rally at Nuremberg on September 8.

as at present formulated, they are certainly nebulous. On the one hand Herr Hitler declared to you that his claim to 35% of the British fleet implied unequivocal recognition of British naval superiority and that any assurance which he gave with regard to it would be for ever. In the same breath, however, he said that on the other hand he did not see any heavenly or earthly authority who could force Germany to recognise the superiority of the French or Italian fleets. Germany's requirements for the protection of her trade were just as great as those of France or Italy for the protection of theirs. He then proceeded to base his claim on the need for the protection of the 'long' coastline in the Baltic in particular and of German communications with East Prussia which for Germany had almost become an overseas colony. If, therefore, Herr Hitler persists in demanding naval parity with France he will in effect claim to possess a fleet over 50% of the British fleet. If this claim is put forward when Germany possesses her present relatively short Baltic coastline, what percentage will she expect to have if and when she obtains colonies or mandates?

8. The introduction of compulsory service was officially described here as the first step towards the liquidation of the Versailles 'Dictate'. Of the other steps the most important is the abrogation of the provisions of the peace treaty relating to the demilitarised zone. There is no doubt that these provisions are regarded by Herr Hitler as an infringement of German sovereignty. It is fortunate that the Treaty of Locarno so specifically guarantees the régime of the demilitarised zone. Herr Hitler has repeatedly said that Germany will honour every obligation which she has freely incurred, and no suggestion has ever been made that the Treaty of Locarno was not freely accepted by Germany. Moreover, Herr Hitler has on several occasions specifically declared his intention of abiding by the Treaty. In his speech in the Reichstag on January 30th, 1934, he said: 'This question (i.e. the Saar) is the only territorial question which remains open between the two countries. The German Government is ready and determined, after the solution of this question, to accept both the spirit and the letter of the Locarno Pact, for there will then exist no territorial question between France and Germany' (see page 12 of the enclosure to my despatch No. 124 of January 31st, 1934).<sup>7</sup> On February 20th, 1934, in his conversation with Mr. Eden he emphatically declared that as regards Locarno, the German Government would scrupulously and faithfully observe every treaty into which it had entered of its own free will (see my telegram No. 77 of February 20th, 1934).<sup>8</sup> In a conversation with the Belgian Minister in March 1934 he said that he considered himself bound by Locarno, where Germany's signature was freely given (see my telegram No. 90 of March 12th, 1934).<sup>9</sup> On July 12th, 1934, he said to me that as regards France, Germany was covered by Locarno (see my telegram No. 190 of July 12th, 1934).<sup>10</sup> Finally, on November 12th, 1934,

<sup>7</sup> Not printed. For this statement by Herr Hitler see *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, op. cit., p. 1169.

<sup>8</sup> Volume VI, No. 302.

<sup>9</sup> Not printed.

<sup>10</sup> Volume VI, No. 499. This statement is there attributed to Baron von Neurath.

and again on March 19th, 1935, the Military Attaché was informed at the Reichswehr Ministry that Germany intended to adhere to the Locarno Treaty and would not alter the treaty status of the demilitarised zone (see my telegram No. 248 Saving of November 19th, 1934).<sup>11</sup> I have good reason to believe that Herr Hitler attributes the safety of his régime during the early months of its existence to the Locarno Treaty which prevented France from launching a war of aggression against him.

9. In the recent conversations Herr Hitler, although he may not have said so as categorically, certainly did not deny that he regarded himself as bound by the Treaty of Locarno. It is difficult to reconcile these various declarations with the language used to my French colleague in my presence and reported in my telegrams Nos. 39<sup>12</sup> and 40<sup>13</sup> of February 3rd and 4th last. You will recollect that on this occasion he said that if France continued on the same path, Germany would be obliged finally to declare that the zone must be abolished or at least made reciprocal. He indicated that in any case German acceptance of the zone was not going to be eternal. Since Germany cannot of her own volition terminate the Treaty of Locarno and there is little prospect of France allowing Germany to fortify the zone, it looks as though the Chancellor meant that he did not propose to abide by the Locarno Treaty for ever.

10. Since 1914 when the breach of Belgian neutrality brought down on Germany the odium of the whole world, she has felt shy of the moral and material consequences of a treaty violation. This sentiment, which is not always appreciated abroad, accounts very largely for the efforts of the German Government to prove that the rearmament of Germany does not constitute a violation of the Treaty of Versailles, a treaty, which moreover is not considered binding since it was imposed by force. If this be so, it may be asked, will Germany cynically violate the Treaty of Locarno? The question is difficult to answer. But the possibility must always be borne in mind that Herr Hitler will pursue the same tactics as he employed in regard to the Treaty of Versailles. That is to say, he may declare the Treaty of Locarno inoperative on the ground that the other contracting parties do not intend to abide by it. It was for this reason that I attached importance to General Göring's enquiry of Mr. Ward Price as to whether Great Britain would honour her obligations to Germany under the Treaty (see my telegram No. 88 Saving of March 28th).<sup>14</sup>

11. According to information given to the Military Attaché, the Army Command objects to the demilitarised zone, not only on obvious strategical grounds, but also because the population is losing military feeling, a fact which is proved by their difficulty in obtaining the proper quota of recruits from this area. In the face of the attitude of the Chancellor and the Army, the best chance of maintaining the régime of the demilitarised zone appears to lie in making it clear that His Majesty's Government intend scrupulously to carry out their obligations under Locarno and expect the other contracting

<sup>11</sup> No. 195.

<sup>12</sup> No. 408.

<sup>13</sup> No. 412.

<sup>14</sup> No. 661.



parties to do the same; and that any violation of the Treaty by Germany would, in their opinion, be a violation of solemn pledges repeatedly given by the Chancellor.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

No. 701

*Notes of a Statement which the Lord Privy Seal had hoped to make to the Cabinet on April 8, 1935, on his return from Berlin, Moscow, Warsaw, and Prague*<sup>1</sup>

[C 2962/55/18]\*

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 7, 1935

I have reported so fully from each capital that I have now little to add, save a few words on the general situation. I see no reason to modify the views set out in telegram No. 45<sup>2</sup> from Moscow, a copy of which is annexed.

2. The essential at the present time is that we should pursue a straight and steady course in support of the League of Nations and of the collective peace system. It may be that we can do, and should do, something more to strengthen peace, but this is not so important as that we should make clear to any potential breaker of the peace that he can count on our active opposition.

3. I found a certain suspicion of British foreign policy, varying in intensity, in each of the capitals I visited. It was of course worst in Moscow. It was due to uncertainty as to our policy and to anxiety lest our desire to be the honest broker would not lead us to yield to Germany's ever-growing demands, even at the expense of our friends.

4. The *Times* bears a heavy measure of responsibility for this. Its leader of the 4th April was a calamity.<sup>3</sup> In every capital I visited I made it clear that we could *not* regard Germany's demand for 550,000 effectives as a basis for negotiation, nor her naval demands either. Clearly they cannot be, for the former would give Germany military advantage over France and Italy, and the latter, naval advantage by reason of the newer tonnage. Anyway, what does Germany want with a navy of that size? She has neither colonies nor a seaboard comparable with that of France and Italy.

5. But the *Times* regards these as 'constructive proposals,' and Europe regards the *Times* as the organ of His Majesty's Government. Sir E. Phipps's telegrams show how much harm that leader of the 4th April has done in Berlin. I can undertake that it will have done as much, or more, harm in Moscow, Warsaw and Prague, to say nothing of Paris and Rome. It is of little use for members of the Government to make long journeys if a part of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Eden was prevented by illness from doing so; see The Earl of Avon, *Facing the Dictators*, pp. 175-8, where the substance of this statement is printed.

<sup>2</sup> No. 656.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 690, note 1.

the confidence they have striven to create is thus to be destroyed. If we are to pursue an effective foreign policy in Europe, it is essential that it should be made clear that the *Times*, with its defeatist leaders, does not represent His Majesty's Government. If this is not done, all our efforts will be vain. I suggest a question and answer in the House as the best method of doing this.

6. As to the policy of His Majesty's Government, I have said that we must be stalwart in support of the League and the collective peace system. Opportunity could perhaps be taken of Stresa to reaffirm our attachment to the Covenant and our determination to carry out the obligations of Locarno.

7. There remain the problems of Central and Eastern Europe. As to the former, we should ask the French and Italian Governments to speed up in conjunction with the Austrian and Hungarian Governments and the Governments of the Little *Entente* the draft of the Danubian Pact, so that it may be presented to Germany as she herself has asked. As to the latter, there is much to be done about the Eastern Pact. Attention should be drawn to the difference now apparent in the attitude of the Polish and German Governments to this pact. Colonel Beck admitted to me that, given certain conditions which should not be difficult of fulfilment (see my record of conversation with Colonel Beck for the exact terms of his reply),<sup>4</sup> he was prepared to agree to a superstructure of pacts of mutual assistance erected upon a general non-aggression pact to which Poland herself would be party. Germany has refused this most unreasonably. At Stresa we should, I think, make it clear that we consider this idea of a superstructure of mutual assistance above a general non-aggression pact as worth pursuing by the interested Powers, and indicate that if they were prepared to do this, we should be ready to bless their endeavours as we did the original proposal for an Eastern Pact last summer. If Germany then still persists in her refusal, the world will be the better able to judge Germany's motives.

8. The greatest care should be taken to avoid any suggestion that Germany's proposed non-aggression pacts are enough, since they are less in fact than the obligations all members of the League undertook towards each other and less also than the obligations which we have undertaken under Locarno.

9. The above proposals may give some useful work for Stresa, but they will not finally solve the European problem, since Germany will refuse to play her part at present in any collective peace system. It is possible that the effect of seeing His Majesty's Government standing loyally, not against Germany, but in favour of the League and of peace, may have more important consequences in modifying Germany's attitude than we can at present foresee. Germany does not like isolation, nor is she so strong internally as to make her willing to endure it. There were indications that even the Moscow visit and the reply of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to a question in the House of Commons admitting 'a wide divergence of view'<sup>5</sup> were having their effect, until the *Times* leader of the 4th April brought Germany fresh cheer and confidence in England's funk.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 684.

<sup>5</sup> See 299 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 2083 (March 28).

10. It may be, however, that His Majesty's Government will consider a reaffirmation of the loyalty to its existing obligation as insufficient to ensure peace. There may be, I hope there will be, a determination to examine whether anything further can be done. If this is contemplated at all, I believe that the most fruitful line of study would be that of a European pact of mutual assistance which would be open to all nations. This might be something in the nature of the protocol of 1924,<sup>6</sup> but limited to Europe. It must not be thought that I am advocating such a proposal off-hand. I do no more than suggest that from experiences gained in these European capitals, if any further contribution is contemplated by His Majesty's Government, it is on these lines that it might well be made. My own conviction is that it is likely that, if we are firm enough in support of our present commitments, nothing further may be necessary, but this is difficult to estimate until after the Stresa meeting.

11. To sum up, I am not myself alarmist about the present European situation, but anxious because the attitude taken up by His Majesty's Government in the next few months may decide the future for years to come. I do not believe a decision for us is so very difficult. We should show ourselves firm in defence of collective peace. If we refuse to be scared or weakened by Germany's growing demands, if we resist the temptation to accept everything Germany asks for as a basis for discussion between us, if for a moment we can cease to be an honest broker and become the honest facer of truths, then I am confident that there is no call to view the future with alarm. If, on the other hand, we appear to the outside world to be weak and vacillating, if we allow the *Times* to continue to preach defeatism and to continue to be regarded as the organ of His Majesty's Government, then we shall encourage Germany's demands, and, no less serious, encourage the weaker Powers to take refuge with her in the belief that the collective peace system can never be effective because England will never play her part in its support.

A. E.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. No. 663, note 6.

## No. 702

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 9, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 255 Telegraphic [C 2967/55/18]*

ROME, April 8, 1935, 9.35 p.m.

This evening's Press displays still greater uneasiness regarding the probable attitude of England at Stresa. 'Giornale d'Italia' publishes an alarmist telegram from London saying that there was increasing tendency in England to dissociate her policy from that of France and Italy. She had not yet approached nearer to Germany but it would be blindness not to see the daily increasing detachment of England from her two western collaborators.

There have been various objections to the suggestion that England should play the part of mediator. It is asserted that by the London agreements<sup>1</sup> she is an interested party.

The feeling against insistence on Eastern Pact in its present form seems to be growing.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Presumably a reference to the Anglo-French communiqué of February 3; cf. note 4 and Annex to No. 400.

<sup>2</sup> A minute by Mr. Creswell read: 'The Italian press have their own game to play. M. J. Creswell 9/4.' In his despatch No. 410 of April 9 Sir E. Drummond wrote that during the previous week 'the hortatory exercises' of the Italian press on the necessity of presenting 'a "united western front" to the arrogant pretensions of Germany' had been chiefly addressed to London and had been 'tinged by impatience and alarm', while 'the references to the delays and hesitations of July 1914 have become more frequent'.

### No. 703

*Sir J. Simon to Sir G. Clerk (Paris)*

*No. 742 [C 2960/55/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 8, 1935*

Sir,

The French Ambassador called on Sir R. Vansittart on April 6, and spoke for some time on the subject of the forthcoming proceedings at Stresa. He made it quite clear that neither the French nor the Italian Government thought that the German draft for an Eastern Pact<sup>1</sup> was in any way adequate, and they will both as we expected treat the provision in regard to not helping an aggressor as in no way meeting the realities of the situation. The Ambassador said plainly that he hoped we did not contemplate asking the French and Italian Governments to accept such an inadequate document. He was told that we must of course bring it to their notice as part of the report of the Berlin proceedings, and that we thought it would be a tactical mistake to reject it without any consideration at all, though we all realised that something further had been, and might still be, required. From this the Ambassador did not dissent.

On the subject of collective security the Ambassador made it clear that the French and Italian Governments would probably wish to proceed with this organisation without Germany if it was not possible to obtain it with her.

Another subject which the Ambassador thought would have to be discussed at Stresa was the degree of collaboration with Soviet Russia. On this subject the interesting point was that the Ambassador clearly did not wish to be drawn too far in this direction if it could be avoided. This tends to dispose of the suggestion that the French have any hankering for a Russian alliance, and Monsieur Litvinoff has made it clear to Mr. Eden in Moscow that this was also the Russian view. There has never been any evidence for this suggestion and indeed there has been some in the contrary sense.

<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1 to third Anglo-German meeting at Berlin, March 26 (No. 651, p. 739).

As to the Air Pact the Ambassador said that we should have to consider at Stresa the procedure to be followed in this respect. He also said that the French hoped that at Stresa we should be able to furnish them with our criticisms on the plan which they had already submitted to us.

He proceeded to say that it was also in the opinion of his Government necessary to consider what the attitude of the interested Powers should be in the case of further infringements of Treaty obligations by Germany. He said further that his Government hoped that one of the results of the Stresa meeting would be a most full reaffirmation of the Locarno Treaties and in particular the reaffirmation of article 4.

The Ambassador also touched on the question of the rearmament of the small States. He said that, after what had been done by Germany, such rearmament must necessarily be only a question of time and procedure, but he felt that the time was not at present opportune and that it would be necessary to exercise some patience in order to get the Powers of the Little Entente into a position where further progress could be made in the practical solution of this question. At present the Ambassador said the other disarmed Powers were happily showing patience themselves and behaving reasonably.

Finally the Ambassador expressed some apprehension at reports he had heard of some impending future statement or communication by His Majesty's Government. There had not, in the view of the French and Italian Governments, been really sufficient time for communication with His Majesty's Government in the case of our last communication with Germany, and he earnestly trusted that nothing of the kind was in contemplation on the eve of Stresa without reference to the other interested Powers. He was told that no such communication was contemplated. The Ambassador referred to a statement which the Secretary of State was reported to be about to make in the House of Commons on Tuesday.<sup>2</sup> Sir R. Vansittart replied that it would be purely objective: it would merely state what had passed at Berlin. His Majesty's Government would express no opinions at all. It would merely be a report to the House of Commons of matters which were already within public knowledge.

I am, &c.,  
(for the Secretary of State)  
R. F. WIGRAM

<sup>2</sup> April 9.

No. 704

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 9, 12.11 p.m.)*

*No. 148 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 2986/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, April 9, 1935

Air Attaché was informed this morning by General Milch that when the Chancellor told you Germany had approximately attained air parity with

us<sup>1</sup> he was referring to Germany's first line strength and to the British front line strength of 800 to 850 aircraft.<sup>2</sup> Chancellor included in the British figures overseas units but not auxiliary or special reserve units.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 687, enclosure.

<sup>2</sup> In his account of this interview, received in the Foreign Office on April 12 as enclosure in Berlin despatch No. 358 of April 10, Group Captain Don said that General Milch had produced a map showing 'France's first-line strength as 2,091, which includes her colonial forces, which General Lt. Milch looks upon as "metropolitan". Unless, therefore, something happens which will check the German Government's programme of expansion, it seems perfectly clear that the intention is to build up to an air strength of over 2,000 first-line aircraft.'

<sup>3</sup> A minute by Mr. Wigram of April 9 included the following comments: 'The plain truth is that the Germans have some 880 machines ready to put in the front line. . . . These are grave and terrible facts for those who are charged with the defence of this country. Not for nearly 300 years has any British Govt. allowed this country to be exposed to such a threat from a Continental Power.'

## No. 705

*Viscount Chilston (Moscow) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 9, 6.10 p.m.)*  
*No. 56 Telegraphic [C 3025/55/18]*

MOSCOW, April 9, 1935, 6.15 p.m.

Today I had a short conversation with Monsieur Litvinov in the course of which I asked whether he had renewed invitation to Baltic States to join Eastern Pact. He said that he had made no official invitation but had merely instructed Soviet representatives to try to ascertain what was now the attitude of each government.<sup>1</sup> He did not seem to expect Latvia to be favourable unless France were to extend her guarantee to them which she was not prepared to do.

As to Poland he remarked it seemed clearer than ever that she would not come into any pact unless Germany did.

He said that Italy now appeared to want to take a strong line towards Germany and that Signor Mussolini was now 'very anti-German'. He added that much would now depend upon Great Britain's attitude.

Monsieur Litvinov expects to start for Geneva the day after tomorrow.

Repeated to Riga, Warsaw, Rome, Berlin and Paris.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 699.

**No. 706**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 9, 5.10 p.m.)*  
*No. 149 Telegraphic [C 2988/55/18]*

BERLIN, April 9, 1935

Press devotes much space to prospects of Stresa conference.

Telegrams from London are unanimous in predicting that His Majesty's Government will stand firm against any proposal to isolate Germany or form European bloc against her.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A minute of April 10 by Mr. Creswell, attached to this telegram, referred to recent leading articles in *The Times* and particularly to that of April 4 (cf. No. 701) as being 'traceable in the news contained in para. 2 of this telegram'. He doubted whether Sir J. Simon's reply to a Parliamentary Question on April 9 (300 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 983-91) had been sufficient 'to put the world on its guard against taking such leaders as "inspired" '.

**No. 707**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 9, 11.5 p.m.)*  
*No. 256 Telegraphic [C 2989/55/18]*

*Immediate*

ROME, April 9, 1935

I gather Signor Mussolini wishes to divide the discussions into two parts, the past and the future. As to the first he has in mind an exchange of views as to the line to be taken at the meeting of the Council of the League at Geneva.

He considers the notes of protest sent to Germany by France and Italy should form the basis of a declaration by the Council.

As regards the future he desires to discuss what action the three Powers should take to prevent any further treaty violation by Germany having specially in mind the Rhineland, Austria and Memel.

I understand that Signor Mussolini favours a policy of 'firmness'.

Repeated to Paris and Berlin.

**No. 708**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 11, 8.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 94 Saving: Telegraphic [A 3393/22/45]*

BERLIN, April 9, 1935

Baron von Neurath informed me today that German Government having accepted in principle your invitation to naval conversations in London<sup>1</sup> are waiting now for further intimation from you as to proposed date of conversations.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 651, p. 732.

He explained that he had wished to make this clear because he had obtained impression that His Majesty's Government were possibly expecting German Government to make the next move.

**No. 709**

*Mr. Torr (Riga) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 10, 1.5 p.m.)  
No. 20 Telegraphic [C 3026/55/18]*

RIGA, April 10, 1935, 1.40 p.m.

My telegram No. 19.<sup>1</sup>

Secretary General telephoned this morning to say that Baltic States had decided to reply that issue was one on which they would have to act together, that they had expressed their approval of principles laid down in London communiqué of February 3rd<sup>2</sup> and that they did not think the moment was ripe for new initiatives pending outcome of Stresa conference.

He was anxious that you should know the position Baltic States had taken.<sup>3</sup>  
Repeated to Berlin, Moscow and Kovno.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. No. 699, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 561.

<sup>3</sup> On April 11 Mr. J. L. Dodds, a member of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, minuted this telegram as follows: 'He [M. Munters] is anxious we should know their position because he knows both Poland and Germany disapprove of it. M. Beck tried to queer their pitch with Mr. Eden [see No. 689, p. 808] by hinting that they didn't care about the Eastern Pact; and they know, so the Latvian Minister tells me, that Germany regrets their declared approval of the London communiqué of Feb. 3.'

**No. 710**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Stresa)<sup>1</sup>  
Unnumbered Telegraphic<sup>2</sup> [C 3058/55/18]*

*Confidential*

BERLIN, April 10, 1935

I hear very privately from his entourage that Chancellor regards Stresa Conference with equanimity as his reports from Paris indicate lack of decision. His London reports are also favourable.

He is still labouring under the disappointment produced by the complete absence of any response on our side to his offer of an Anglo-German agreement. He now considers that there is no alternative for Germany but some form of co-operation so as to stave off a united front against her. He is veering round to the idea of collective security for duration of his pact with Poland, much to the disgust of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Sir J. Simon, Sir R. Vansittart, and other officials of the British delegation left England on April 10 for Stresa.

<sup>2</sup> Repeated to the Foreign Office at 11.16 p.m. on April 10, received at 9.30 a.m. on April 11, as Berlin telegram No. 150.



As for Austria, Chancellor now thinks a non-interference pact would be a definite help if so drafted as to rule out foreign interference should Austria go Nazi and proclaim Anschluss.

If Stresa hurls no thunderbolts he will accept any negotiations proffered him and proceed slowly with them. He would as before welcome an air pact or a convention to limit the size of weapons. He would also discuss collective security, subject to Russia's exclusion.

If the League chooses to reform itself and if Germany could be declared worthy to exercise a mandate he might—to Bülow's disgust—elect to remain in the League next October. But he will take no initiative in the matter himself. He also objects to international river Commissions in Germany under the treaty.<sup>3</sup>

He is perturbed by secret reports from Paris and Brussels to the effect that the French and Belgian coastal aerodromes have been inspected by our Air Ministry and that the French air experts have visited England on some similar mission.

He would take action in Memel were it not that Great Britain might be involved as a guarantor.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. the Treaty of Versailles; see Part XII, Section II.

## No. 711

*Record by Mr. Dodds of a conversation with the Latvian Minister*  
[C 3062/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 10, 1935*

The Latvian Minister called to-day to say that Mr. Beck had apparently informed Mr. Eden at Warsaw that His Majesty's Government had misunderstood the declaration made by the representatives of the Baltic States to the Secretary of State on March 13th.<sup>1</sup>

M. Zarine had been instructed by his Government to say that the Latvian Government stood by his declaration on March 13th (the text of which is in the attached document, which he gave me).<sup>2</sup>

J. L. D.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 560.

<sup>2</sup> This document was identical with No. 560. Mr. Dew, a member of the Central Department, minuted on April 13: 'I don't know what the Latvian Minister is talking about. M. Beck never informed Mr. Eden that H.M.G. had misunderstood the declaration of March 13.' Mr. Dodds referred to two comments by M. Beck during the Anglo-Polish conversations on April 2 and 3 (No. 689, pp. 808-9), and wrote, on April 16: 'The Poles and Germans naturally dislike the declaration of the Baltic States of March 13, as it was pro-Eastern Pact, and M. Beck tried to minimise its significance to Mr. Eden.'

*Letter from Sir J. Simon to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald*<sup>1</sup>

[C 3087/55/18]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 10, 1935*

My dear Prime Minister,

I have for some time been very gravely concerned by reports which have been received in the Foreign Office of the rapid growth of the German Air Force; and information which has reached me in the last few days has considerably increased my apprehensions.

A high official of the German Air Ministry yesterday informed our Air Attaché in Berlin that the precise meaning of the Chancellor's statement to me in Berlin that Germany had 'attained air parity with Great Britain' was that Germany's first-line strength had now reached that of the British front line strength including machines stationed abroad and in the naval air arm (some 900 machines in all).<sup>2</sup> The regular Royal Air Force squadrons stationed in this country amount to only one half of this figure (453 machines) and even though we have in addition a further force of some 130 machines in the auxiliary squadrons (corresponding to territorial troops) the German superiority over all first-line machines stationed in United Kingdom aerodromes under Air Ministry control now seems to be some 30 per cent. I can see no likely motive for the German Air Ministry deliberately to exaggerate to our Air Attaché the figure of their present air armaments.

I understand that the Air Ministry now believe there to be 1,375 machines of military type in Germany; and our secret reports give a total of 3,000 machines of every type now in existence. In fact therefore the front line has already considerable reserves.

Still more disturbing than the *numbers* of first-line military aeroplanes in Germany is the information we have from secret sources as to the *speed at which these aeroplanes are being manufactured*. The same German Air Ministry official recently told Group Capt. Don that Germany was aiming at a factory output sufficient to double her first-line strength in two months; and we have very good reason to believe that the present rate of production of aeroplanes is at least 200 per month and very probably more. The number of men employed in the German aircraft industry doubled between the autumn of 1933 and the autumn of 1934, and has increased by a further 83 per cent. since last October. I very much doubt if our own factory production can equal these figures; and I understand that the true measure of a country's strength in the air is just this factor of the relative power of output and rapid expansion of production.

Two very pointed questions were asked in the House of Commons this afternoon on this subject and the Under-Secretary for Air admitted that the matter was one of grave concern.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from this letter are printed in The Earl of Avon, *Facing the Dictators*, pp. 183-4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 704.

<sup>3</sup> See 300 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 967-8 (April 9).

I cannot think that you will not share my grave apprehensions on this question, and I would like to suggest that this matter should be submitted to a Committee of Imperial Defence committee for an immediate report with definite conclusions, not only on German military and civil air strength and on her manufacturing capacity, but also on the actual air policy which she is following and its likely repercussions on the whole defence position of this country. The danger which it reveals is growing graver every day and one may have considerable doubts whether once left behind by Germany in the air, we shall ever be able to attain a level of parity with her again.

The conclusion which might have to be drawn from the above figures, if they are correct, is that this country is seriously open to the threat of sudden attack by a Continental Power in a degree to which it has not been exposed for hundreds of years.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Secretary of State for Air and to the Lord President, and to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The formal ending of this letter is missing on the filed copy.

### No. 713

*Letter from the Marquess of Londonderry<sup>1</sup> to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald<sup>2</sup>*  
[C 3087/55/18]

*Secret Immediate*

AIR MINISTRY, April 10, 1935

My dear Prime Minister,

The Foreign Secretary has sent me a copy of his letter to you of 10th April,<sup>3</sup> and I write immediately to inform you that I had already taken in hand the preparation of a paper for submission to yourself and subsequent circulation to my colleagues urging the advisability of the further expansion of the Royal Air Force beyond the programme of expansion approved by the Cabinet last July and now in course of execution, not only in view of the air force which Germany already possesses of whose precise strength we are at present uncertain, but particularly in view of Herr Hitler's declared

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State for Air, November 1931 to June 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Copies of this letter were sent to Sir J. Simon, Mr. Baldwin, and Mr. Chamberlain. A minute by Mr. Hoyer Millar of April 18 explained that Lord Londonderry's letter was received in the Foreign Office after Sir J. Simon's departure for Stresa. A copy of the letter was sent to him by bag on April 12. After it became known to the Foreign Office on April 15 that the Air Ministry intended to put its views before the Cabinet on April 17 the Prime Minister was asked whether he would like to be furnished with a brief giving the Foreign Office views or would like Lord Stanhope to state them to the Cabinet. He declined both suggestions as 'the question would only be discussed in a very preliminary way'. The Air Ministry's paper (circulated to the Cabinet as C.P. 85 (35) of April 15) was received in the Foreign Office at midday on April 16. Later on April 16 Mr. Baldwin was informed that Sir J. Simon and Sir R. Vansittart were anxious that the matter should be referred to the Committee of Imperial Defence immediately.

<sup>3</sup> No. 712.

intention of attaining parity 'with the Force in Metropolitan France plus that in North Africa'.<sup>4</sup>

I mentioned my intention to the Chancellor at the Cabinet this morning by way of preliminary notice in view of the financial considerations which are involved.

The Foreign Secretary suggests examination by a committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, but in view of the extreme urgency of our reaching a decision on the principle of the question of further expansion of our air force, I should prefer reference to the Cabinet in the first place, when, if necessary, the question could be referred to the Ministerial Disarmament Committee or a committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence for examination as to detail.<sup>5</sup>

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Yours very sincerely,  
LONDONDERRY

<sup>4</sup> See No. 651, p. 738.

<sup>5</sup> For Lord Londonderry's general views on the situation at this period, see The Marquess of Londonderry, *Wings of Destiny* (London, 1943), pp. 126-41.

## No. 714

*Letter from Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Sargent (Received April 13)*

[C 3122/55/18]

BERLIN, April 11, 1935

My dear Sargent,

My telegram No. 150<sup>1</sup> to the Foreign Office.

2. Bülow and his colleagues at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs are very disappointed with the Chancellor's latest change of mood. Naturally they attribute this to Ribbentrop and feel that they are being more and more ignored so far as German policy is concerned. Neurath, being a weak character, follows the Führer and advises Bülow to put up with Ribbentrop philosophically.

3. Bülow, who threatened to leave if he were ignored during the Secretary of State's visit, has not carried out his threat, mainly I understand because Neurath has appealed to him not to leave the Ministry in the lurch. There is nobody, he says, competent to take Bülow's place so far as the administrative and general work is concerned. The Ambassadors and Ministers overseas would soon notice the absence of a firm hand at the wheel, and the results would be very bad for German interests. Bülow appears to be affected by these arguments and there is no doubt that he takes a genuine pride in the working of the machine which has never functioned so smoothly as under his

<sup>1</sup> No. 710.

guidance. It is true that there is no senior official approaching him in ability in the Ministry at the moment, but I should have thought myself that there might have been substitutes to be found overseas.

4. You will remember the recent fuss about the number of aeroplanes in Germany's possession. It appears that the German Air Ministry drew Hitler's attention to his mistake in telling the Secretary of State that the German Air Force was equal to ours.<sup>2</sup> They pointed out that the German force was considerably inferior as it possessed no reserves or ground establishment comparable to ours. The Minister for Foreign Affairs then allowed the German Embassy in London to issue a denial,<sup>3</sup> but when Sir John made his statement<sup>4</sup> the Chancellor thought it better not to pursue the matter. It is not the first time that a German Government have put a German Ambassador abroad into a false position and left him to extricate himself by his own devices.

Yours ever,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 687, enclosure.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Times*, March 30, p. 14. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iii, No. 567, note 3.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably a reference to Sir J. Simon's statement on the Anglo-German conversations in the House of Commons on April 9; see 300 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 985-6.

## No. 715

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Stresa)*  
*No. 1<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [C 3116/55/18]*

BERLIN, *April 12, 1935*

Your telegram No. 1.<sup>2</sup>

In reply to your enquiry Baron von Neurath states that German government are prepared to enter into an Eastern Pact on lines indicated by him notwithstanding the fact that some of the other parties might conclude arrangements for mutual assistance provided that such arrangements were embodied in absolutely separate documents. Germany could not approve arrangements for mutual assistance by signing any document with which they were associated and she would prefer that if any such separate arrangements were entered into they should not be concluded on the same occasion as general pact.

Baron von Neurath said that it was Germany's desire to diminish political anxieties and promote a peaceful atmosphere. In his personal opinion it was doubtful whether any arrangement involving mutual assistance would be likely to contribute to such appeasement but in order to show her good-will Germany would not make her co-operation in a general collective system

<sup>1</sup> Repeated by telephone to the Foreign Office as Berlin telegram No. 151, received April 12, 12.20 p.m.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 717 below.

conditional on abstention by other parties from complete . . .<sup>3</sup> arrangements for mutual assistance.

Baron von Neurath was prepared for your enquiry and said he had discussed this very point with the Chancellor yesterday. He has since obtained and telephoned Chancellor's formal approval of his reply. In these circumstances and in view of urgency of the matter I have not thought it necessary to ask for appointment with Herr Hitler himself.

<sup>3</sup> The text is here uncertain. It was suggested on the filed copy that it should read: 'from completing arrangements'.

## No. 716

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 13, 8.30 a.m.)*

*No. 97 Saving: Telegraphic [C 3119/206/18]*

BERLIN, April 12, 1935

The Naval Attaché<sup>1</sup> was asked to attend at the Marineleitung today to be given information about the German Naval Building programme. He was informed that it had been decided to give the Building Programme to all the Naval Attachés next week, probably on Friday, 19th April. Knowing of the Naval Attaché's departure for London on Monday next<sup>2</sup> Admiral Raeder wished him to have the information in advance, so that he could be quite up to date when he reported to the Admiralty. He was asked, however, to keep the information strictly confidential, and not to communicate it to other Governments until it was released to the other Attachés next week.

2. The following is the building programme for 1935:

(a) Work will be recommenced on 'Ersatz Elsass' and 'Ersatz Hannover', already laid down at Wilhelmshaven and Kiel respectively.

(b) Two new cruisers have been ordered. One will be built in the Deutsche Werke, Kiel, the other by Blohm and Voss at Hamburg.

(c) Sixteen destroyers will be built. This figure includes the four destroyers already under construction. Five more have already been started at Germania, Kiel, and seven more have now been ordered from various yards.

(d) There may be some other small craft, but nothing else of importance.

3. The Naval Attaché asked if any submarines were to be built. He was informed that no submarines were being ordered at present. It was intended to build some submarines in the future, but it had been found very much more difficult than had been expected. It was very difficult to overcome the loss of sixteen years' experience in submarine work and submarine construction. None had yet been laid down, and none have been definitely ordered.

4. The Naval Attaché asked for details of the ships now to be built, but received the reply that this information could not be given, although there was nothing startling in the design of the new ships.

<sup>1</sup> Captain G. C. Muirhead-Gould.

<sup>2</sup> April 15.

*Sir J. Simon (Stresa) to Mr. Baldwin<sup>1</sup> (Received April 13, 9.30 a.m.)*

*No. 4 Telegraphic [C 3140/55/18]*

STRESA, April 13, 1935, 8.58 a.m.

Following sent to Berlin No. 1 April 11th (begins):

In reporting here today to French and Italian Ministers effect of Berlin conversations between Herr Hitler and myself I referred to scheme for an Eastern Pact put forward by Germany and contained in document of 5 paragraphs handed to French Minister [? British Ministers] by Baron von Neurath on March 25th.<sup>2</sup> Copies of this document were handed to Signor Mussolini and Monsieur Laval. I explained that Herr Hitler in reply to my question as to his view if some other parties in such pact entered into an agreement of mutual assistance as amongst themselves had stated that he thought this idea was 'dangerous and objectionable'. I was however unable to inform French and Italian Ministers whether objection expressed by Herr Hitler on this point should be understood as a refusal by Germany to join in any Eastern Pact such as she had proposed in Baron von Neurath document<sup>2</sup> if in fact it was supplemented by mutual assistance arrangements entered into by other signatories.

2. Please see the German Chancellor and ascertain definitely from him as soon as possible how this matter stands. I should much regret it if German offer was made conditional upon no such supplementary arrangements being entered into and should welcome clear statement that Germany nevertheless was prepared to enter into such a pact on lines she had indicated whether other Powers (such as France and Russia) entered into supplementary assurances for mutual assistance or not. Indeed it will be widely felt that fact that Germany is not prepared to enter into a Pact of mutual assistance is not a justification for insisting that other parties to Eastern Pact should not do so.

3. I hope it may be possible for you to get an answer on this important but simple point very speedily as opportunity for keeping the door open for German co-operation so far as possible must on no account be missed. If an answer in this sense is promptly received it would then be possible to examine outlook [?outline] which Baron von Neurath put forward with a view to seeing whether it provides a possible basis or whether it requires modification or addition.

4. Can you let me have an answer before we leave here if possible by Saturday<sup>3</sup> at the latest.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Baldwin was in charge of the Foreign Office during the absence of Sir J. Simon and Sir R. Vansittart; cf. No. 710, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> A reference presumably to the note on the Eastern Pact handed to the British Ministers by Baron von Neurath on March 26; see No. 651, Annex to Third Meeting.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. April 13; for Sir E. Phipps's reply see No. 715.

## No. 718

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Stresa)*

*No. 2<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [C 3148/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, *April 13, 1935*

News from Stresa is on the whole favourably received by the press.

In telegrams from special correspondents and in leaders following points are made.

1. British delegation has stood firm in resisting proposal to form bloc against Germany. Their attitude has cleared the air and made prospects brighter.

2. German reply yesterday to British enquiry regarding Eastern Pact<sup>2</sup> has made a good impression and has proved that German attitude is not purely negative. Outlook for German participation in a collective system as desired by England is thus improved.

3. Decision of Conference regarding forthcoming Council meeting<sup>3</sup> represents a victory for British delegation.

<sup>1</sup> Repeated to the Foreign Office on April 13 as Berlin telegram No. 98 Saving, received April 15 at 8.30 a.m.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 715.

<sup>3</sup> See No. 722 below, Fifth Meeting.

## No. 719

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Stresa)*

*No. 5<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [C 3143/55/18]*

BERLIN, *April 13, 1935*

My telegram No. 4.<sup>2</sup>

I took the opportunity of my visit to read to Baron von Neurath the first two paragraphs of my telegram No. 1.<sup>3</sup> He said it conveyed his reply with complete accuracy and that its contents are only confirmed with amplification in the statement to be published.<sup>2</sup> This was largely composed by Herr

<sup>1</sup> Repeated by telephone to the Foreign Office at 1.10 p.m. on April 13 as Berlin telegram No. 154.

<sup>2</sup> This telegram, of even date, repeated by telephone to the Foreign Office at 12.57 p.m. as Berlin telegram No. 153, gave the text of the German proposals with regard to an Eastern pact. They were released for publication in the press on April 14 (cf. *The Times*, April 15, p. 13), and are also printed in *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iv, No. 29.

The penultimate sentence of the first paragraph of section III of the German text as given in telegram No. 153 read as follows: 'As it [i.e. the German Government] has no aggressive intentions itself it does not feel affected by real offensive agreements either.' The word 'offensive' was apparently an error in transmission subsequently amended to 'defensive' on the filed copy: it appeared as 'defensive' in the press publications, including *The Times*. The same amendment was made in the last paragraph of the telegram.

<sup>3</sup> No. 715.



Hitler personally and is intended for the enlightenment of public opinion at home.

Baron von Neurath remarked that the German reply in this sense had not been easy to make and was specially intended to be of assistance to the British delegation.

**No. 720**

*Sir E. Drummond (Rome) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 13)*

*No. 427 [C 3218/55/18]*

ROME, April 13, 1935

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 421<sup>1</sup> of April 12th, I have the honour to transmit to you, for purposes of record, a third summary<sup>2</sup> of Italian press comments on the Conference at Stresa.

2. The hostile and suspicious note previously adopted so far as British policy was concerned has now, you will observe, almost entirely vanished; and there is evident relief at the prospect of at least some measure of 'solidarity' between Great Britain and the two other Western Powers.

I have, &c.,

(for H.M. Ambassador)

E. M. B. INGRAM

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. It stated that the general tone of Italian press comments was 'rather less critical of British policy' (cf. No. 702). Sir E. Drummond wrote: 'I would particularly direct your attention to the good reception of the Prime Minister's declaration on April 11th to the British journalists.' This statement appears to have contained the gist of Mr. MacDonald's opening statement at the Stresa Conference; cf. No. 722 below.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

**No. 721**

*Mr. Preston (Kovno) to Mr. Torr (Riga)*

*No. 22 Saving:<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [C 3150/55/18]*

KOVNO, April 14, 1935

Your telegram No. 22 addressed to the Foreign Office.<sup>2</sup>

Decision of Latvian and Estonian Governments to defer discussion of Soviet Government's proposals<sup>3</sup> until after meeting of foreign Ministers of the three Baltic States on May 6th next has caused disappointment and indignation at Kovno which are shared by Soviet representatives.

Lithuanian Government has always counted on Eastern Pact in so far as it might have been anti-German combination, as this would be source of

<sup>1</sup> Repeated to the Foreign Office at 9.10 p.m. as Kovno telegram No. 30, received at 9.30 a.m. on April 15.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 699.

support for their policy of intransigence [*sic*] at Memel. For the same reason they will hardly welcome eleventh hour decision of Germany and Poland to participate in pact.

Repeated to Foreign Office, Berlin.

## No. 722

*Notes of Anglo-French-Italian Conversations held at the Palazzo Borromeo, Isola Bella, Stresa, from April 11 to 14, 1935 (Received April 18)*<sup>1</sup>

[C 3289/55/18]\*

Present:

### *United Kingdom*

Mr. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, Prime Minister.

Sir JOHN SIMON, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Sir ROBERT VANSITTART, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. STRANG, Foreign Office.

### *France*

M. FLANDIN, President of the Council.

M. LAVAL, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

M. LÉGER, Secretary-General, Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

M. LÉON NOËL, 'Chef de Cabinet' to M. Flandin.

### *Italy*

Signor MUSSOLINI, Head of the Government.

Signor SUVICH, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Baron ALOISI, 'Chef de Cabinet' to Signor Mussolini.

FIRST MEETING, APRIL 11, 1935, AT 11 a.m.

### *Preliminary*

MR. MACDONALD said that he would like to make it clear, before Sir John Simon reported on his visit to Berlin, to the representatives both of the French and Italian Governments what His Majesty's Government had generally in their minds. There had been all sorts of reports, and people on the Continent still thought that certain newspapers were official. There ought, he said, to be no doubt as to what they were going to try to do at Stresa. The British Ministers had come to demonstrate their solidarity of purpose, and to make it clear that the three countries were agreed that Germany must not assume

<sup>1</sup> Date of filing in the Foreign Office. A minute of April 23 by Mr. Creswell records that 'the French and Italian Govts were both given copies of our provisional minutes—in type-script form [not traced in Foreign Office archives]—before our delegation left Stresa'. Instructions were sent to Paris and Rome on April 25 to communicate officially to the French and Italian Governments copies of the revised minutes.

that she could resort with impunity to such actions and methods as those for which she had recently been responsible. Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden had been finding out what was in Germany's mind, in the hope that Germany might be brought into a peaceful organisation of Europe, and that she might be induced to give full and active and loyal support to the League as a member thereof. It would be the object of the meeting to discuss ways and means.

He wished to start with a clear and definite statement. Great Britain remained a loyal partner in the League, and would co-operate with France and Italy and all other members in order to make the League supreme as the moral authority of Europe at any rate. His Majesty's Government were pursuing, and would continue to pursue, the problem of collective security. They would continue to try to get scales of armaments agreed upon by binding instruments, and to secure the honest observance of such instruments by checks or by examination or any other reasonable means that might be devised. The general aim of His Majesty's Government was the restoration of mutual confidence as the indispensable condition of peace.

Finally, he would say, that if at Stresa it was possible to come to a rapid agreement, the very rapidity of its conclusion would have a great effect upon the opinion of the world.

M. FLANDIN thanked Mr. MacDonald for his statement. France was also faithful to the League of Nations and to the organisation of collective security through the League. France desired, above all things, the reinforcement of such security. What had struck the French Government in connexion with recent violations of the Treaties, was that the League possessed no machinery automatically applicable for preventing such violation. He thought it most important that an attempt should be made to try to devise such machinery.

*A statement by Sir John Simon on the visit to Berlin*

SIR JOHN SIMON said he understood that the French and Italian Ministers would like a statement as to the effect of the conversations which Mr. Eden and he had been conducting in the various capitals, and more particularly as to the general effect of the conversations in Berlin. The French and Italian Governments would already have had some account of the Berlin visit from the French and Italian Ambassadors there.

The Berlin conversations<sup>2</sup> had dealt with all the topics mentioned in the London communiqué. He proposed to state quite objectively what had occurred rather than try to make an appreciation.

He had opened by saying that His Majesty's Government were deeply concerned to ascertain what would be the future course of events in Europe. Germany would either co-operate for the general purposes of European peace—and this would be the better way. Or else, if Germany remained apart and continued to disregard her obligations, there would be an inevitable drawing together of other Powers against the common danger.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 651.

### *Eastern Pact*

The French and Italian Ministers were aware of the Chancellor's general position in regard to the Eastern Pact. Baron von Neurath had produced a document<sup>3</sup> in which the German Government stated under five heads their ideas in regard to an Eastern Pact (at this point copies of this document were handed to the French and Italian Ministers).

Herr Hitler made it plain that Germany was not prepared to sign an Eastern Pact under which Germany would be bound to mutual assistance. In particular, she was not prepared to accept engagements of mutual assistance between herself and Russia. On the other hand, Germany was prepared to accept a multilateral non-aggression pact, and to add provisions for consultation, arbitration and conciliation. She was also prepared to accept an undertaking not to lend support to an aggressor.

Two other points had emerged. The first was that in present circumstances the Chancellor excluded Lithuania from his proposed multilateral non-aggression pact, not as a matter of principle, but pending the proper regulation of the question of Memel.

The second point arose in connexion with a question put to the Chancellor. Supposing some of the other signatories were prepared as between themselves to supplement the general pact by mutual covenants of assistance, how would this affect the German proposal? The Chancellor did not in terms say that he would not in that event join a multilateral non-aggression pact. He said that he would consider such arrangements as dangerous and objectionable.<sup>4</sup>

### *Central European Pact*

Sir John Simon said that the British Ministers did not gather that the German Government raised any objection of principle to the proposed Central European Pact. Herr Hitler had made a very elaborate statement, the gist of which was as follows: Germany had no intention of invading Austria or of using any form of violent interference. She, therefore, did not see any necessity for such a pact. On the other hand, if the Governments who desired a pact could agree upon the text, the German Government would be ready to give it consideration.

A further point made by Herr Hitler was that a definition of non-interference would be difficult to find and even more difficult to apply.

### *League of Nations*

The Chancellor's fundamental attitude was that Germany could not come back to the League until she was really satisfied that the position was such that she could remain without having to withdraw once again. Herr Hitler claimed credit for candour in stating his difficulties immediately. He mentioned two of such difficulties.

His first point was that the Covenant was part of the structure of the Peace Treaty and required to be separated. Sir John Simon had pointed out that

<sup>3</sup> See Annex to Third Meeting in No. 651.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 651, p. 716.

the Peace Treaties had opened with the Covenant, because this was regarded as the best security against conflicts in the future.

It was well known that Herr Hitler wanted other changes in the structure of the Covenant, but he said nothing about these during the conversations. Sir John Simon recalled that he had had discussions with Signor Mussolini on this very subject.<sup>5</sup>

Herr Hitler's second point was that Germany could only return if she did so as a country of equal rights and not in the position of a country of inferior rights. He had challenged this description of Germany's position; she had enjoyed a position of complete equality in the League.

Herr Hitler then gave one illustration of inferiority. Japan, which had now left the League, was in possession of a former German colony. Germany, if she now returned, would not be regarded as fit to hold a mandate for a colony. The Chancellor made no express claim on this point, but used the position of Germany as an illustration.

#### *Air Pact*

The Chancellor was in favour of the conclusion of an Air Pact. He had agreed with Sir John Simon that the actual figures for limitation of air arms would not be found in the Air Pact itself, but in some other instrument.

#### *Armaments*

The French and Italian Ministers would be aware from Sir John Simon's statement in the House of Commons on the 9th April<sup>6</sup> what were Germany's requirements in the matter of armaments. He would not spend further time on this point unless this was desired. Germany's figures were stated not as a matter for negotiation, but as absolute requirements upon which Germany had decided.

Sir John Simon added that he and Mr. Eden had, of course, not remained silent. Their object had been to learn what Germany had to say. They certainly had obtained some information, and they hoped that the French and Italian Governments agreed that the visit had been useful.

Sir John Simon had made it plain that there was no question of negotiations between Germany and the United Kingdom. He assured M. Flandin that he had taken an opportunity to say to Herr Hitler that it was no part of British policy to try to make a new friend at the expense of an old one. The Chancellor had quite understood this and had made no attempt to separate Great Britain and France.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI then began to give a summary in French of Sir John Simon's statement.

#### *Eastern Pact*

M. LAVAL interposed to ask whether Herr Hitler had said that Germany was opposed to obligations of mutual assistance superimposed as a second

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Volume VI, No. 164.

<sup>6</sup> See 300 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols 985-6

storey upon a first storey consisting of a multilateral non-aggression agreement. Was Germany's position that she would agree to no pact of any kind in the event of other parties making separate arrangements of mutual assistance?

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that the answer was not entirely clear. Herr Hitler regarded such special arrangements as objectionable and dangerous; but he did not say in terms that Germany would in such an event absolutely refuse to accept a multilateral non-aggression pact.

MR. MACDONALD said that his own impression was that Germany would not agree in that event to come into a multilateral non-aggression pact.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that, if they were to take the German proposal as the lower storey and if they were to inform Germany that some of the signatories would definitely want to build a superstructure of mutual assistance, Germany would have to give a definite answer whether or not she considered that the superstructure destroyed the whole house. In the view of His Majesty's Government, Germany had no right to take up that attitude. Public opinion in Great Britain would not agree that Germany could reject the whole pact on the mere ground that other parties wished to go further than she did. This was a question which would have to be put to Germany.

M. LAVAL agreed that this question was important for the French Government. They were disposed to propose to Germany the conclusion of a multilateral pact of non-aggression and consultation, but they feared delaying tactics on the part of Germany. They had still received no reply from the German Government to their last communication to Berlin,<sup>7</sup> although Sir John Simon had been good enough to urge them to reply. The French Government were anxious to get Germany into a pact of non-aggression and consultation and had made the suggestion to Germany months ago. If the French Government now went on to conclude a pact of mutual assistance, he hoped that British public opinion would not think that they had acted with undue haste. The French Government had now decided to do so, and they considered that German dilatoriness had completely absolved them from any charge of undue speed.

SIR JOHN SIMON observed that the important fact was that the German Government had formulated the outline of a pact which they were prepared to accept. This outline did not include mutual assistance. Would it not be well to take note of this fact and at the same time to make it plain that other parties to the pact would be at liberty to conclude arrangements of mutual assistance among themselves? Germany would then either say that in that event she would take no part at all or she would say that the other Powers could go ahead.

M. LAVAL said that he would not at that stage make any detailed comment on Baron von Neurath's proposal. He thought it was an astute document which had the effect of excluding mutual assistance.

MR. MACDONALD was not sure that this was so. It was not stated in express terms at any rate.

<sup>7</sup> See No. 342, note 1.

He was clear on one point. If the tenants of a second floor organised a trade union and if Germany then refused to be a tenant on the first floor; if Germany, that is to say, hampered the action of those tenants who wished to create security for themselves, British public opinion would strongly disapprove of Germany's attitude. It was important to be able to tell the British public exactly what the German attitude was.

### *Central European Pact*

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI continued his summary of Sir John Simon's statement. He asked whether it was clear to Sir John Simon what non-interference meant.

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that he had not wished to intervene in any detail in a question on which Great Britain was in a secondary position. The Germans apparently thought that the condition about the restoration of the Hapsburgs and the condition of the loan that Austria should not affect her economic independence<sup>8</sup> were examples of interference.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI asked whether Germany would come into the pact if it were found possible to define non-interference.

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that Herr Hitler had said that, if the other interested parties could settle upon the text of a pact, Germany would examine it with sympathy. It was not, however, for Germany to take the first step.

M. LAVAL pointed out that here again Germany was adopting the usual dilatory procedure. Both the French and Italian Governments had sent suggested definitions to Berlin. The German Government would never come to an agreement on the point. They always wished to ask fresh questions. They would multiply questions in order to create delay.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI asked whether Herr Hitler had said that Germany took up a special position as regards Austria from the economic point of view.

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that Herr Hitler had said that it was inevitable that the Austrian population would pass into the circle of the Reich. He had given as an example the great number of people resident in each country having relatives in the other country. For this reason Herr Hitler saw no reason to press matters. He said he had his own economic difficulties and did not wish to add to them by assuming the burden of Austrian difficulties also.

MR. MACDONALD said that this was a situation which they as realists would have to face. Herr Hitler's state of mind was that the fruit above his head was ripening and that he did not need to shake the tree as the fruit would fall into his hand by the process of nature.

Mr. MacDonald did not suggest that he bowed to the situation, but it was important to realise that this was Herr Hitler's view.

M. FLANDIN asked whether Mr. MacDonald had any views on the manner in which the situation might be met.

<sup>8</sup> The text here should probably have read: 'the condition of the loan that it should not affect Austria's economic independence'. Cf. No. 355, note 2, for the Lausanne loan of 1932, and No. 6, note 6, for the Geneva Protocol No. 1 of October 1922 on the basis of which assistance was given.

MR. MACDONALD said that he hoped this matter would be discussed while they were at Stresa.

M. LAVAL said that the French Delegation would have proposals to make.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that it was important to remember that the day upon which the fruit fell, Germany would have eighty million inhabitants.

SIR R. VANSITTART observed that the diagnosis was, however, not necessarily correct.

### *League of Nations*

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI then continued his summary.

He asked whether Herr Hitler's ideas about colonies and mandates were clear or whether he had merely made a passing reference. Had Herr Hitler actually demanded the return of colonies?

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that it had not been an actual demand. But Herr Hitler had used a reference to this subject to illustrate that Germany was a nation in a position of inferiority.

SIR R. VANSITTART said that Herr Hitler had indicated in effect that he wished Germany to be considered as fit to exercise a mandate.

SIR JOHN SIMON here read an extract from the record of the Berlin conversation on this point.

### *Air Pact*

M. FLANDIN asked whether there had been any allusion to possible bilateral air agreements.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that there had been no such allusion. He had explained to Herr Hitler that the air pact would add precision to Locarno. He did not encourage the idea that it was to be anything else. Herr Hitler had said that the air pact was a clear and practical idea. The Chancellor had also liked the idea of some prohibition of indiscriminate bombing.

On the other hand, the Chancellor had said that he regretted the order of priority adopted, namely, a limitation of air forces and then the conclusion of an air pact. He regretted this because the air pact itself was a relatively simple matter, while the limitation of air strengths raised complicated problems. The limitation of the air forces of the Locarno Powers, he had said, could not be independent of developments in Russia.

The Chancellor had added, if an air pact could be concluded in the first place, this would assist the prospects of agreement upon parity of air forces.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI asked whether Herr Hitler had confirmed that Germany had reached parity with Great Britain in the air.

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that Herr Hitler had produced a map with figures for the air forces of a number of European countries, but giving no figure for Germany. Sir John Simon had asked the Chancellor what the German figures were. His question had been unexpected, and the Chancellor, after



consulting other members of the German Delegation, had replied that he could say that Germany had already reached parity with the United Kingdom. He had given no details, but had simply made this statement.

His Majesty's Government had subsequently asked for supplementary explanations in Berlin, and His Majesty's Ambassador had been told that the figure in the Chancellor's mind was 880 first-line machines.<sup>9</sup>

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI asked whether there had been any discussion of the limitation of the air bombardment of civil populations.

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that he had observed to the Chancellor that one of the anxieties of His Majesty's Government about the air pact was that it might seem to sanctify the use of bombing machines against the civil population. The Chancellor had agreed, and said that he would be glad to see some clause introduced into the air pact with a view to the prohibition of the indiscriminate bombing of the civil population. Apart from the question of finding a definition, a further difficulty would be to make sure that the promise was observed.

Sir John Simon had remarked that this was an important point because civil aviation had been highly developed in Germany, and civil machines could carry bombs as easily as passengers.

Herr Hitler had agreed, but had said that there was no way of reaching agreement on this point except by giving undertakings and creating a strong conviction that the undertakings would be observed. It was on the strength of undertakings alone that prisoners of war were not killed and military doctors not shot.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that it would be useful to pursue this subject. The questions were: Was Herr Hitler favourable to a pact? With whom would he sign it? In what terms would he sign it?

SIR JOHN SIMON thought that it would be useful to get on with the drafting of a text. They had prepared a text in London and the French Government had done the same. It would be useful to see whether the main lines of a pact could be settled in consultation with the other Locarno Powers.

M. LAVAL said that the French Government had drawn up a text and had communicated it to the British Ministers.<sup>10</sup> They still insisted on the indivisibility of the problems set forth in the London communiqué; but in view of the grave dangers of air attack, they had tried to find a means by which the Locarno Powers could benefit by the provisions of an air pact in advance of the conclusion of the general settlement. They had made a further study of this point, and the question could be discussed at Stresa when the general review was concluded.

The French Delegation had proposals to make as regards the exact measures which would be taken by each of the parties in the event of each concrete case, such, for example, as German aggression upon Great Britain or upon France or upon Italy. M. Laval here read extracts from a document which it was understood would be communicated in due course to the other delegations.

<sup>9</sup> See No. 704; see also No. 714.

<sup>10</sup> See No. 517, Annex.

SIR JOHN SIMON observed that there were apparently two different conceptions as to procedure. One was to consider whether it would be possible to get on with the drafting of a pact, Germany not being excluded. The other, which M. Laval had in mind, was to settle what would be the precise form of assistance to be given by the parties if one of them was attacked by Germany.

M. LAVAL said that he had in mind a series of agreements which would render the air pact applicable pending the conclusion of the general settlement. The French General Staff had been working on this, and the French Delegation had a draft convention which answered this purpose. If they were to wait for Germany to do something, they would have to wait a long time. Germany would continue to improve her armaments position with impunity. The French Government thought it wise to submit proposals on the air question, which was of vital interest to the three Governments represented at Stresa.

The French proposal would be submitted later on. It would not be possible, of course, to settle, conclude and sign the proposed agreements at Stresa, but it was not enough merely to meet at Stresa in order to exchange impressions as to the attitude of Germany. It was necessary to exchange views on the measures to be taken in this or that particular case. The air pact was one of these cases.

The French Government were well aware of the attitude of British public opinion, and appreciated the cautious attitude of His Majesty's Government. They had welcomed the action of His Majesty's Government in connexion with the Saar, but too long a delay, and indifference on the part of His Majesty's Government, would not be in the interests of the defence of peace. The French Government therefore thought it their duty to bring these suggestions before His Majesty's Government. They wished to build peace on a solid foundation, and the air pact was part of this foundation. They would like to know one way or the other what was the view of His Majesty's Government.

French policy was not aimed at the encirclement of Germany, but if Germany refused to take part in the organisation of security, the other Powers would have to do what they could without her in the hope that she would participate later.

The French Delegation had proposals to make at Stresa not only as regards the air pact, but as regards also the Eastern Pact, the Central European Pact and the question of the League of Nations. Some of these were of greater interest to some delegations than others. It was necessary to produce tangible results at Stresa and not be content with a vague communiqué.

#### *Future procedure*

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI thought that the conversations that morning had defined the problem. They ought not to be haunted by the time factor. If they could do something to restore confidence they could then go on doing useful work quietly and unhurriedly.

There was one question upon which it was necessary to take a decision, namely, the French appeal to the League of Nations.<sup>11</sup> This was an urgent matter as the Council was meeting on the 15th April. Was it possible for the three delegations to decide upon a common attitude to be adopted by them at Geneva in regard to this appeal? There had been three notes of protest about the German action of the 16th March. Would there be a triple attitude at Geneva or a common attitude? This was the first immediate problem.

There was a second problem. If there should be further unilateral violations of treaties, would it be possible for the three Powers to settle upon a common attitude?

After these two questions would come those of the Eastern Pact, of the Central European Pact, of the Air Pact and of Germany's return to the League. As to these, it was natural that the attitudes of the three Governments might not be the same for geographical reasons. But there could be fundamental community of views. Violations of the peace anywhere had reactions everywhere. Conflicts could not be isolated. Peace was an indivisible European fact.

MR. MACDONALD said that there might be details in the discussion when there would be differences between any two of those present. But if each Government would define its attitude, he could not see that there would be any difference in principle.

On the first point, namely, the French appeal to the League, were they going to Geneva united or divided? He hoped they would be wholeheartedly in agreement. So far as he was aware of the terms of the French appeal, he thought the United Kingdom Delegation would be with the French Delegation.

What would happen if there were another unilateral violation of a treaty? This question could be discussed. They could have a frank exchange of views and see what proposals each delegation might make. There might well be points which British public opinion would be unable to accept and upon which His Majesty's Government might require further information and time for examination. But he believed that the British attitude would be to do everything possible to secure complete agreement. This would not divide the common front. They had come to discuss those points which Signor Mussolini had enumerated. It was to be hoped that before they left they would cover the whole ground. The conference would now settle down and take the programme point by point.

M. FLANDIN thanked the Prime Minister for his statement. He agreed that they could now pass to practical examination of the various points on the agenda.

The most urgent matter of all was the French appeal to the League. He thanked Mr. MacDonald for his promise of support. There was good reason to hope that there would be no difficulties.

As regards the second point, he agreed with Signor Mussolini that it was necessary to augment the conditions of security in view of possible future

<sup>11</sup> See No. 629.

unilateral violations of treaties. Before passing to the various points set forth in the Anglo-French communiqué it would be necessary to determine what was to be done in the event of a new violation. It was desirable to settle at Stresa that no such violation could take place without bringing into action certain measures organised in advance. On this matter the French delegation would have a practical solution to propose.

He agreed that it would then be desirable to take the various points enumerated in the London communiqué. He agreed with Signor Mussolini that this would be the best agenda of the meeting.

MR. MACDONALD observed that what he had said about the French appeal at Geneva was that he saw no difficulty in co-operating at Geneva, from what he knew of the French attitude so far. He would like to hear a statement from the French delegation as to what they proposed to do at Geneva. It would be necessary to know what the French proposal was before coming to a final view.

M. LAVAL said that he would submit at the meeting that afternoon two documents relating to the French appeal to the League. These would be:—

- (1) A draft memorandum in support of their appeal. This document had already gone to Geneva, but would not be circulated there until it had been examined at Stresa. It was still subject to modification if either the British or Italian delegations had views to express. It was, of course, a document for which the French delegation would be entirely responsible.
- (2) A draft resolution for adoption by the Council. This resolution would have to be submitted to the Council by the Rapporteur; but the French delegation would like if possible to agree upon its terms with the British and Italian delegations at Stresa. They did not wish to do anything except in agreement with the other two delegations.

At Sir R. Vansittart's request M. Laval handed him a copy of the draft memorandum referred to in (1) above. (See Annex I.)<sup>12</sup>

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he wished to make an observation on procedure.

It was agreed that the first thing to do was to study the question of the French appeal to the League.

As regards the second point on the agenda, he was not quite sure that the proposal was the right one. Was there not something to be done first before reaching that point? Was it clear that there was nothing to be done as regards Germany? Ought it not to be decided, for example, whether or not it should be ascertained from Germany whether she would be prepared to adopt the proposals? Were they to treat the past as putting Germany completely outside? Were they to consider whether Germany's proposals could be proceeded with? Ought this not to be used as a means of putting further views to Germany in order to let public opinion know what was really in Germany's mind?

<sup>12</sup> Not printed. An English translation of the memorandum as submitted by M. Laval to the League of Nations on April 9 is printed in *L/N.O.J.*, May 1935, pp. 569-71.

M. FLANDIN thought that there was no ambiguity. He had not suggested that the point at issue was another violation by Germany. What he had in mind was any unilateral violation of a treaty. He did not wish to put Germany in any special position of inferiority. As regards Germany's views on the Eastern Pact and on the Air Pact, he certainly agreed with Sir J. Simon that it was not their intention to put Germany outside their conversations.

M. LAVAL said that he accepted Sir J. Simon's proposal in the following sense. Sir J. Simon had given information and had communicated certain proposals from the German Government. They would be lacking in their duty if they did not try to appreciate what the German proposals were worth. There was no disagreement as to procedure. They might look upon those proposals in different ways for geographical reasons, but on the point of procedure they were agreed.

It would be necessary to deal with the French appeal as an urgent matter. As to the other matters, it might not be possible to reach agreements, but it would be necessary to examine the various proposals. It would be desirable to discuss some simple, clear resolution upon the attitude of the three Governments to the position as a whole.

MR. MACDONALD said that he agreed, provided that it was made clear at the appropriate time that attempts were to be continued to be made to get Germany to understand the gravity of the situation, and to leave no stone unturned to convince the various peoples that they had made every effort to get Germany back into the comity of nations. In the event of failure, it must then be made clear that the sole responsibility was hers.

M. FLANDIN and M. LAVAL expressed agreement.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

## SECOND MEETING, APRIL 11, 1935, AT 5.30 p.m.

### *French appeal to the League*

M. LAVAL read the text of the draft French memorandum to the League of Nations, which had been communicated to the United Kingdom delegation at the previous meeting (for text see Annex I to record of First Meeting).<sup>12</sup>

He explained that this memorandum had been addressed to the Secretary-General, though it had not yet been circulated to the Council. He would have it circulated as it stood unless either the British or Italian delegations had any observations. Although it was a purely French document, he had thought it right to submit it to the other two delegations first. He was prepared to consider any amendments provided these were amendments to form and did not touch the substance.

MR. MACDONALD said he was obliged to M. Laval for communicating this document. He thought it would be better for the French Government to communicate it to the League on its own responsibility, seeing that it followed the French appeal to the League and gave the reasons in support of that appeal. It would be much more useful to discuss the text of the proposed Resolution.

M. LAVAL said that the French Government accepted full responsibility for the memorandum and did not ask for it to be discussed at the present meeting.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that he agreed. If the memorandum had been for discussion, there were things he might have said. If Germany had rearmed, this resulted in part from the indecision and delays in the policy of the Governments represented at the present conversations. Time had not been on their side. In 1934 Germany had been willing to accept 300,000 short-term service troops.

M. LAVAL objected that by raising her present figures so considerably above the figure of 300,000 Germany had demonstrated her insincerity. Perhaps it was as well that her insincerity had been unmasked.

*Draft Resolution for the Council*

M. LAVAL then read the text of a draft Resolution which the French Government would wish to be adopted by the Council (Annex I).

MR. MACDONALD said that he could not, of course, say yes or no to this document at once. A careful study would have to be made both of the text and of its implications.

M. LAVAL agreed that careful study was required. The draft was the result of much thought. As regards the paragraph dealing with economic sanctions, the French delegation had prepared a further explanatory memorandum showing what was in their minds. (He did not, however, communicate the text of this memorandum.)

It was clear that the Council must take note of Germany's violation, and either condemn or absolve it. Otherwise, the Council would make itself ridiculous; the matter was one which had caused emotion all over the world. The Council must also provide sanctions for the future. He pointed out that no specific mention of Germany was made in the last paragraph; that paragraph referred to any Government which might in the future unilaterally violate a treaty obligation.

The Resolution had been very difficult to draft. He had tried his hand at a great many texts before deciding on the one now before the meeting. The most important paragraph of the Resolution was Section III of the operative part. This paragraph provided for economic sanctions against any Government that violated a treaty obligation; but it was made clear that such violation must be such as affected the security of States and the maintenance of peace.

MR. MACDONALD suggested that consideration of this draft might be deferred until the following day.

M. LAVAL agreed that the United Kingdom delegation had every right to ask for time to consider the text which had now been submitted to them.

SIR JOHN SIMON observed that the text was short, but extremely important. His Majesty's Government had made a careful study of the operation of economic and financial action, and that study had revealed very great difficulties. He would recall the case of Japan which had violated an obligation

relating to the security of States and the maintenance of peace.<sup>13</sup> He did not remember that the French and Italian Governments had suggested economic action to meet that case.

M. LAVAL pointed out that the Resolution only suggested a *study* of the question of economic action. The difficulties to which Sir John Simon referred could only really arise when that study took place, and when the proposed committee presented its report. The condemnation of Germany was accompanied by a proposal for a study to be made in respect of the action to be taken in the event of any violation by any Government in the future.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that Section I of the Resolution did not cause him much difficulty. He rather wondered, however, about the word 'condemns.' The word was just, but would it perhaps not give Germany a pretext for not returning to Geneva?

SIR JOHN SIMON asked whether it was proposed to invite Germany to sit at the Council.

M. LAVAL referred to Section II of the Resolution which might be regarded as an invitation.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that perhaps his question had not been clear. If a person was the subject of an accusation, it was usual to communicate the accusation to that person and to give the accused an opportunity of stating his defence.

M. LAVAL said that if the suggestion that the Resolution should contain a condemnation of Germany was a difficulty, he would observe that all three Governments had already condemned Germany in their notes of protest.<sup>14</sup> If it was desired to soften the Resolution, this could be done by introducing a reference to those notes. He was not asking the other two Delegations to do anything new.

MR. MACDONALD said that this was true. They had been trying to ascertain what the French intentions were. They now knew them. The Resolution was a shortish document; but was there any controversy connected with the whole situation that was not evoked by it? It would take him more than a mere hour to study the paper.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he shared the preoccupations of M. Laval. It was indeed difficult to see what effective action the League could take. He had felt sympathy with the search the French Government were making for a solution, but that solution was very difficult to find.

M. LAVAL observed that he was not asking for very much. He was not asking the Council to do anything courageous. He was not asking them to *take* sanctions. All that he wanted was that they should make a study for the future. He had so defined the violations in question as to make the Resolution applicable only to very serious cases. He had racked his brains to discover what sanction he could ask for. Condemnation was not enough, so he proposed a study by the Council, so as not to cover himself and the Council with ridicule. Could the Council really do less than he had proposed?

<sup>13</sup> A reference presumably to Japanese attitude towards Manchuria, 1931-3. See Volumes VIII-XI.

<sup>14</sup> See Nos. 591-4, and 627.

Was it permissible, or was it good for peace that Germany should accumulate stocks of material which were useless for the needs of her people, and that she should behave as though she might declare war at any moment? The British information on this point was probably fuller than the French. Could the Council remain silent? He would be glad if any alternative solution could be found. His own proposal was the best that he could find, and he could not possibly have made it more anodyne.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that he was prepared to accept the text of Sections I and II, though he thought the word 'condemn' was rather stiff.

As regards Section III, (i) What were the obligations referred to? (ii) Was it good to specify what kind of measures (*i.e.*, economic and financial measures) were to be taken? Such measures were double-edged. (iii) What Powers would be represented on the proposed committee?

M. LAVAL said that the constitution of the committee would be decided at Geneva, as well as the question of the *rapporteur*.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that he would prefer to leave out (1) the words prescribing that the measures were to be economic and financial, and (2) the words saying that the measures proposed in the committee's report would be applicable as from the adoption of that report.

M. LAVAL said that the author of both these phrases was M. Basdevant.<sup>15</sup> He himself rather agreed to the second suggestion.

MR. MACDONALD wondered whether this was the most effective way of achieving the object. If they fired a long-distance gun at Berlin, would not Herr Hitler merely smile and send an effective reply? Signor Mussolini had rightly reminded them that they were all in part responsible for the situation. Would there not be a controversy between Berlin and the League?

He also agreed with Signor Mussolini that economic sanctions looked simple but were double-edged. They might well hurt those who applied them more than those against whom they were applied. Was there no means by which the proposed condemnation could be brought strictly home to Germany, and by which Germany would be asked whether she was prepared to do something? This something would be such that, if she refused, she would be completely isolated. Was it wise to adopt the method of the proposed resolution before exploring an alternative? It might be better to bring Germany before the bar of all decent opinion in Europe. If Germany were presented with the alternative of entering into the security system or rejecting it altogether, the path would be clear. The question should be put in such a way that, if Germany refused, she was not merely condemned by a number of Governments, but by decent opinion the world over.

M. FLANDIN said that, if His Majesty's Government had a firm proposal to make which would avoid the future danger of violation, he would be delighted, but the time for moral sanctions was long past. France would never agree that unilateral repudiation could not be prevented.

If they did not draw the necessary consequences from the violation that had occurred, the position would be intolerable. Let there be no delusion;

<sup>15</sup> Assistant Legal Adviser in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



violations in the past had succeeded so well that there would be more in the future.

France had chosen the least radical article of the Covenant and its least radical paragraph, namely, Article 11, paragraph 2. The appeal to other articles would have caused greater embarrassment to the League. French public opinion would require to be satisfied, first, that violation had been condemned; and secondly, that further violation would be prevented. This was a modest request. The French Government might well have asked that the proposed action should be retroactive and should be taken in respect of past acts. They had, however, confined themselves to the future.

If it came to a remilitarisation of the demilitarised zone, no Government in France could do other than ask for the immediate application of Locarno. All that they were now asking [for] was economic action. Everything in life was difficult. In order to maintain peace, based on the Covenant, some sacrifice was necessary. Mobilisation would be a greater sacrifice than the inconvenience of economic action. The alternative would be military alliances, and they would be forced to make war in order to avoid war.

It was essential to prevent further violations, and to that end, and rather than have later to appeal to Locarno, the French Government now made their present modest proposal.

M. LAVAL said that, if they adopted Mr. MacDonald's suggestion, France would have to bear responsibility for the rearmament of Germany.

MR. MACDONALD said his position was simple. He had not yet been able to study the resolution, and had suggested a suspension in order to gain the necessary time. He had made a casual observation to the effect that Section III was rather weak, and asked whether it might not be made more effective. He had not said that he was opposed to Section III; but merely that he had not had time to consider it. If the French Delegation would agree to a suspension of the discussion, he would go through it to see whether some amendment might not be drafted. He did not at all suggest that Section III should be weakened.

Sections I and II could be accepted without great modification. As to the rest, he hoped to be in a position to give a reply on the following day.

M. FLANDIN said that he had not asked for an immediate answer. He had explained the reasons for the French proposal, and why it was a minimum. If Mr. MacDonald wanted to strengthen it, he would be glad to have his amendments.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI also said he would like time to consider the draft.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that his difficulty was that the proposal was not really very effective.

MR. MACDONALD repeated that he had at present no opinion on it; but hoped it might be possible to find something better. He was fully conscious of the seriousness of the situation, and would work at the resolution that night in order to be in a position to give an opinion at the next meeting.

Agreement was reached upon the general line to be taken with the Press.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

## ANNEX I TO SECOND MEETING

*Preliminary Draft of a Resolution by the Council (Translation). April 4, 1935  
(Communicated by the French Delegation, April 11, 1935)*

The Council,

Considering that the scrupulous respect of all treaty obligations is a fundamental principle of international life and an essential condition of the maintenance of peace;

Recalling that it is an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can free itself from treaty undertakings nor modify the terms of a treaty save with the consent of the Contracting Parties;

Taking note that by a series of measures and notably by the promulgation of the military law of the 16th March, 1935, the German Government has repudiated, by an unilateral decision, an international obligation which it had contracted concerning the status of its armaments;

Considering that by this initiative the German Government cannot confer upon itself any right, but that the result of its decision has been to introduce a new disturbing element into the international situation,

Considering, in particular,

That the British Government and the French Government, with the approval of the Italian Government, had communicated to the German Government as early as the 3rd February, 1935, a plan of negotiations, the successful conclusion of which was to provide notably for the organisation of security in Europe, and for a general limitation of armaments in a system of equality of rights, whilst it would also have ensured the active co-operation of Germany in the League of Nations;

That in these circumstances the initiative of Germany taken in the midst of the negotiations—whilst revealing the extent of the illegal, vast and uncontrolled rearmament to which the Government of the Reich has proceeded—must necessarily seem in the eyes of the countries particularly interested to be a threat directed against their security;

### I

Reaffirms the duty of all the members of the international community to respect the undertakings which they have contracted,

Condemns this deliberate failure of Germany to honour her undertakings;

### II

Invites the Governments which took the initiative in the plan of the 3rd February, 1935, or which gave their approval to it, to continue negotiations which they have begun, and, in particular, to promote the conclusion, within the framework of the League of Nations, of any regional undertakings which may appear necessary, due account being taken of the obligations of the Covenant, with a view to assuring the maintenance of peace;

### III

Considering that the League of Nations, without endangering its very existence, could not admit that a State should with impunity proceed to the unilateral repudiation of its undertakings,

The Council,

Decides that any violation of international undertakings of interest to the security of nations and the maintenance of peace, shall, without prejudice to the terms of these undertakings, provoke, on the part of the Members of the League and within the framework of the Covenant, all such measures of coercion notably of an economic and financial character as shall be appropriate to the situation.

Requests a Committee composed of (here shall follow the names of the Powers in question) to submit to it for this purpose proposals which can be adopted forthwith.

THIRD MEETING, APRIL 12, 1935, AT 9.30 a.m.

*Draft Resolution for the Council (continued)*

MR. MACDONALD said that the delegation had carefully examined the French text since the last meeting (see Annex to record of second meeting). The preamble and Sections I and II had been slightly amended, and were now acceptable.

Section III on the other hand committed the three Governments to economic and financial sanctions. His Majesty's Government had carefully examined the question of economic and financial action. The results were not encouraging. The enquiry was still being pursued, and a new proposal was about to be examined. This proposal was that measures should be applied in respect of a few essential minerals and raw materials only.

He would be glad if agreement could be reached on some modification of the first paragraph of Section III which would not commit the parties to a definite declaration. Would it not be possible to make some declaration as to the seriousness of the situation, without actually establishing a commitment as to economic and financial action? As regards the proposed enquiry by a Committee, could not this enquiry cover the machinery for collective security itself as well as economic and financial action?

His Majesty's Government had not decided against the principle of economic action, but had so far been able to find no practical plan.

(At this point Mr. MacDonald circulated a revised text of the French draft.)

M. FLANDIN said that he understood the practical difficulties of applying economic and financial measures. The French Government had also made a study of this question, and their conclusion was that practical measures could be found. They would propose to submit their views to the Geneva Committee when it was set up.

In the French text there was one element which was not found in the British draft, namely, that the violation of a treaty ought to provoke application of

certain measures. He was quite prepared that the question should be referred to a committee for study, but he wanted some affirmation that there would be measures of coercion.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that he agreed with the French delegation. Some affirmation was necessary in order that possible future offenders might be put on their guard.

After a short consultation with the Prime Minister and Sir R. Vansittart, SIR JOHN SIMON said that one of his difficulties was this. While the resolution stated that the Council would decide that violation 'shall be' followed by certain measures, it went on to say that a committee would try to find out what these measures should be. If the declaration had said 'should be' or 'ought to be' it would be easier to understand.

M. FLANDIN said that he had never wished to limit the proposed action to economic and financial measures. There were other measures foreshadowed in the Covenant. Nevertheless it was a moral duty that some action should be taken. A violation ought not to be unpunished.

MR. MACDONALD recognised the logic of M. Flandin's argument. The practical difficulties still, however, remained. It would do no good to assert that action would be taken and then find that no means could be found to make that action effective.

Would it not be possible to devise some formula indicating that violations ought not to be overlooked and that the world ought not to remain passive in the event of violations occurring?

If the Council passed this Resolution and Germany committed another violation next day, what was to be done?

M. FLANDIN said he was quite ready to reply. He would be ready to propose to his Government to mobilise the French Army.

There was nothing in the French Draft which did not fall within the four corners of the Covenant.

SIR JOHN SIMON observed that, so far as he remembered, there was nothing in the Covenant providing for coercive action merely on the ground of the violation of a Treaty. The French proposal was in fact that the methods of Article 16 should be applied not to aggression of [*sic*] war, but to disregard of a Treaty. This was entirely new ground.

M. FLANDIN replied by referring to Article 13, which referred to breaches of international obligations and to the power of the Council to propose steps for giving effect to an award.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI thought that the French proposal was moderate. There was nothing new in it except the appointment of a Committee to carry out certain studies.

The German violation of the 16th March was dealt with in Sections I and II of the Draft. Future violations were dealt with in Section III. He was ready to accept the French Draft.

If a violation occurred and no action was taken, the eventual result would be mobilisation, which was a prelude to war. It was better to look ahead and take some less serious measure forthwith.

There were two alternatives: either to exclude the possibility of violations in which case there was no need for Section III; or to admit the possibility of further violations. If anything, he thought the French Draft too moderate.

MR. MACDONALD said that each country had its own possibilities of action. The special problems of each country should be taken into consideration. Only so was joint action possible. Violations might be small; or they might stir the heart of this or that country. In these matters psychology was as important as the accomplished fact. It was impossible for him and Sir John Simon to return and report that they had committed His Majesty's Government to take action such as contemplated in the event of a possible series of occurrences anywhere in the world. The proposed obligation was world-wide. There was another serious question, namely, was the proposed Resolution likely to pass the Council, where a unanimous vote was required? It would be a calamity if it were defeated. Three Latin-American States could not be counted on to support it and some European States were doubtful.

M. FLANDIN said that the French Draft defined the relevant violations as those which were of interest to the security of nations and the maintenance of peace.

He appreciated the possible difficulties at Geneva, but it was quite likely that some amendment would be made in the Resolution at Geneva.

What was important was the maintenance of peace in Europe. If they left Stresa without making it clear that a new violation would not be passed over like that of the 16th March, irreparable damage would be done to the peace of Europe. It was necessary to say that violations would not be tolerated, otherwise peace was in danger.

France herself had a guarantee even more sure than that of the Covenant, namely, that of the Locarno Treaty. Her preoccupations were less for herself than for others. The French Government begged their British friends to collaborate for the sake of European peace.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI, referring to M. Flandin's remark about the peace of Europe, said that recent experience had shown that the influence of the League diminished with distance. Its action had been satisfactory in the Saar, unsatisfactory in South America and the Far East.

MR. MACDONALD suggested that a paragraph might be drafted saying that they could not be indifferent to further violations which endangered the peace of Europe, that in such circumstances they agreed to call the Council in order to deliberate on what should be done to deal with this danger.

M. FLANDIN wondered whether what Mr. MacDonald had in mind was that Section III of the Resolution should be omitted and that a declaration should be made at the Conference at Stresa.

MR. MACDONALD said that what he was trying to do was to find a way of declaring that they could not be indifferent to violations, without at the same time entering into the definite commitments which had been included in the French draft.

M. FLANDIN said that he wanted to meet the views of His Majesty's Government. He was anxious for an agreement; and, above all, for what he might call the publicity of an agreement.

If the British Ministers thought it easier to simplify Section III and to reserve the declaration for the Stresa communiqué, he would see no objection.

M. LAVAL said he thought that Mr. MacDonald's proposal would come better as a declaration from Stresa.

MR. MACDONALD said that if it formed the subject of a declaration from Stresa, it would be directed against Germany.

(At this point the meeting was suspended in order to allow the British delegates to consult together.)

MR. MACDONALD explained that his idea had been that the form of words he had proposed should be introduced into a Council Resolution, and not constitute a separate declaration made at Stresa.

M. FLANDIN said that he had suggested it as a separate declaration because he thought this would help Mr. MacDonald. But if the latter preferred to include it in the Resolution, so much the better.

(At this point there was a further suspension, during which the French Delegation communicated to the United Kingdom Delegation a re-draft of Section III of the French draft (Annex I).)

MR. MACDONALD said that the new French draft had met the British views in some important points. The United Kingdom Delegation had itself also made a re-draft of the same Section (Annex II), which they proposed to circulate to the other two Delegations.

It was agreed that the two drafts should be considered at the forthcoming meeting.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

#### ANNEX I TO THIRD MEETING

##### *M. Flandin's Re-draft (Translation) of Section III of proposed Council Resolution, April 12, 1935*

### III

Considering that the unilateral repudiation of international obligations may endanger the very existence of the League of Nations as an organisation for maintaining peace and promoting security,

Decides:

That such repudiation, without prejudice to the application of the measures already provided in international undertakings, should, in the event of its having relation to undertakings concerning the security of peoples and the maintenance of peace in Europe, call into play all applicable measures on the part of Members of the League and within the framework of the Covenant.

Requests for this purpose a Committee composed of . . . <sup>16</sup>  
to propose measures to render the Covenant more effective in the organisation

<sup>16</sup> Spacing as in the original.

of collective security and to define in particular the economic and financial measures which might be applied.

## ANNEX II TO THIRD MEETING

*British Re-draft of Section III of proposed Council Resolution,  
April 12, 1935, 1 p.m.*

### III

Considering that the unilateral repudiation of international obligations may be a danger to peace and may call into question the very existence of the League of Nations as an organisation for maintaining peace and promoting security,

Decides:

That such dangers can only be met by effective co-operation between States which the European situation makes it difficult to promote,

And, in consequence, requests a Committee composed of . . . . 16 to consider and report what steps can be taken to make collective security more effective, and, in particular, what economic or financial measures would be appropriate and practical in respect of any further unilateral repudiation of international obligations which might be a danger to peace, whether the violator is a member of the League of Nations or not.

## FOURTH MEETING, APRIL 12, 1935, AT 3.30 p.m.

### *Draft Resolution for the Council (continued)*

M. FLANDIN said that paragraph 2 of the British draft (see Annex II to the record of the third meeting) stated a wish and not a decision. Paragraph 3 merely provided for a study of the question. It would be better to do nothing at all than to adopt anything so inadequate as this.

SIR JOHN SIMON recognised that M. Flandin appreciated the British difficulties. British Ministers could not at Stresa enter into a new commitment, for the simple reason that the House of Commons had been assured that the Stresa Conference was not a meeting where it was intended to enter into any new engagement.<sup>17</sup>

Was the French proposal (see Annex I to record of third meeting) a new commitment? If so, the British Ministers were not qualified to accept it. This was why he was disturbed by M. Flandin's comment on the British text.

M. FLANDIN explained that the French Delegation had tried in their draft to meet the British difficulties. They had no intention of leading His Majesty's Government into new commitments. There was nothing in the French draft that went beyond the bounds of the Covenant.

The British draft would represent a retreat rather than an advance, and the French Delegation could not accept it.

M. LAVAL said he well understood the British position. The British Ministers had given certain assurances to Parliament, and it would be

<sup>17</sup> See 300 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 987.

improper to press them to accept proposals which they thought incompatible with those assurances. The operative part of the French draft was the last paragraph, providing for a report by a committee. It was enough for one member of the Council to oppose that report in order to secure its rejection. His Majesty's Government themselves could block it if they wished. He himself would have no difficulty, if he had to put the case in the House of Commons, in reconciling the assurances given by His Majesty's Government with the terms of the draft resolution now proposed by the French Delegation.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that in view of what M. Flandin and M. Laval had said, the Prime Minister and he would try to join in approving a draft on the lines of that which the French Delegation were urging them to accept. It was not necessary for them to examine it word by word at that moment. He would suggest, if Signor Mussolini agreed, that a final text on the lines of the French draft should be worked out by the technical advisers of the three delegations.

He felt bound to point out, however, that he could not be sure that this text would commend itself to all the members of the Council.

M. FLANDIN agreed. The preamble and the first two sections of the resolution had already been revised by the jurists and the French Delegation were ready to accept them.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI recalled that the draft resolution must remain secret. The *Rapporteur* would have to deal with the question when the Council met on the 15th April.

M. LAVAL said that the work they had done on the resolution was really the *Rapporteur's* work. The *Rapporteur* might perhaps be the delegate of Spain or of Turkey.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI supposed that the *Rapporteur* would take over the Stresa draft, and that the three delegations would inform him that they were in agreement with it.

M. LAVAL hoped that Sir John Simon would not only accept the text at Geneva, but use his influence in its favour with certain delegations.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he assumed that M. Laval would put the draft into the *Rapporteur's* hands as a secret communication, informing him that the French, British and Italian Delegations were willing to support it.

### *Eastern Pact*

SIR JOHN SIMON said that there was one matter about which he had been asked a question on the previous day when reporting on his Berlin visit. Herr Hitler had said that it would be dangerous and objectionable if, in an Eastern Pact based on non-aggression, some of the other signatories made arrangements for mutual assistance as between themselves. M. Laval had asked Sir John Simon whether Germany was prepared to enter a multilateral non-aggression pact even though some other Governments added to this pact separate arrangements for mutual assistance, or whether Germany's attitude was that she would make no pact at all if agreements for mutual assistance were made by some other signatories, Sir John Simon had replied that he did not know.



He had since then put the question to the German Government and was in a position to report its reply.<sup>18</sup> The answer was as follows: Baron von Neurath had informed His Majesty's Ambassador that the German Government were prepared to enter into an Eastern Pact on the lines indicated by them, notwithstanding the fact that some of the other parties might conclude arrangements for mutual assistance provided that such arrangements were embodied in absolutely separate documents. Germany did not wish to sign a document of which other clauses contained provisions for mutual assistance.

M. LAVAL said that this cleared up the position. France now had latitude to make with Russia a bilateral arrangement of mutual assistance without hindering the negotiation and conclusion of a multilateral pact of non-aggression.

This was all the more agreeable as the French Government had, as a result of negotiations which had been going on for some time, undertaken to conclude a pact of mutual assistance with the Soviet Government. He would give the British and Italian Governments the main lines of this agreement, though the precise terms had not yet been fixed.

SIR JOHN SIMON hoped that whatever arrangement was under negotiation would be carried through in such a way as to make it plain that it was not outside Geneva and the League of Nations, but within the framework of the Covenant.

M. LAVAL said that Sir John Simon could be completely reassured on this point.

SIR JOHN SIMON explained that he made this observation because he had to think of the attitude of British opinion. It was one of his duties to inform the French Government when he was sure that British public opinion would be seriously affected by the manner in which things might be done.

M. LAVAL said that Herr Hitler's declaration had satisfied him. He asked Sir John Simon to inform the British public that the pacts which France was concluding would be made with a view to peace and not war.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that he took note of Sir John Simon's statement, but without taking any action upon it.

SIR JOHN SIMON enquired whether the French and Italian Ministers would be in favour of including the statement they had just heard in the announcement to be made to the Press after to-day's meeting. His own feeling was that it would be better to give it to the Press. It would give the impression that they were really considering the results of the recent visits.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI agreed that it should be done. It would be good to make known the attitude of the German Government towards the Eastern Pact.

M. LAVAL said that it would not embarrass him if this were done. He would draw the moral. Germany became less audacious when the other Governments determined to act together.

<sup>18</sup> See Nos. 715 and 717.

### *Central European Pact*

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that the situation in Austria was not good. The present Government had not the prestige of the Dollfuss Government. The youth of the country was against it and in favour of the 'Anschluss.'

A further negative factor was the economic situation.

As regards positive elements, one was that of religion and another was the power of the Executive.

On the other hand, the police and a good deal of the army had been won over by the Nazis. The Austrian Government did not want to introduce conscription because if they did so the majority of the army would be Nazi.

If there was any hope of help,<sup>19</sup> the situation would be precarious. The situation for the moment was quiet because Herr Hitler had changed his tactics—Nazi activity was now underground.

Another dangerous element was the divergence between the Catholic forces and those of Prince Starhemberg. Signor Mussolini had told the Austrian Chancellor at Florence<sup>20</sup> to unify his para-military forces. The Chancellor had not done this.

The 'Anschluss' would not be a direct threat to Italy. The line of German advance was the valley of the Danube. Italy was defended by the Alps and by her military forces. She had sent an Army Corps to Bolzano two years ago since Herr Hitler came into power. The Brenner Pass was an easily defensible frontier.

The danger was indirect, but was a threat to everybody. Germany at Vienna meant Germany on the Bosphorus, and the revival of the Berlin-Bagdad drive.

Germany at Vienna would not need to worry about the Little *Entente*. There were 3½ million Germans in Czechoslovakia, 700,000 in Yugoslavia, 500,000 in Hungary, and 600,000 in Roumania. Hungary was already in the German orbit, and there were strong pro-German tendencies in Roumania. In Greece the Royalist movement was Germanophile. In Turkey all the technical advisers, except the financial adviser, were German. Germany had strong advance guards on the Danube.

Germany at Vienna would expel France, Italy and Great Britain from economic activity in the Danube valley.

It was necessary for the Stresa meeting to do something for Austria. Austria was awaiting the results with anxiety.

In view of this he would propose a resolution recalling the declarations of February and September<sup>21</sup> and the Rome and London communiqués.<sup>22</sup> He could not ignore the arms requirements of Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria. The Central European Pact might help to solve this problem, with

<sup>19</sup> Presumably a reference to the possibility of help being given by Germany to the Austrian Nazis.

<sup>20</sup> Signor Mussolini and Dr. von Schuschnigg had met in Florence on August 21, 1934; cf. No. 42.

<sup>21</sup> Of February 17 and September 27, 1934; cf. No. 124.

<sup>22</sup> Of January 7 and February 3, 1935, respectively; cf. No. 335 and No. 400, note 4 and Annex.

the assent of Roumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The Resolution would say nothing new.

It would, he thought, be useful to uphold the morale of those Austrians who still believed in the independence of their country.

(At this point Signor Mussolini communicated copies of the draft Resolution (Annex I).)

M. LAVAL said that Signor Mussolini had made a cogent exposition. His draft Resolution was much weaker than his speech.

At Rome he and Signor Mussolini had tried to supplement the deficiencies of the earlier declarations by proposing a framework of conventions to be concluded for the effective protection of Austria. Signor Mussolini's paper would detract from rather than add to what already existed. The Stresa meeting ought to do better than that. If they contented themselves with Signor Mussolini's paper, the countries concerned would think that they were failing to act with necessary expedition.

He realised that His Majesty's Government had no intention of taking any part in the effective defence of the independence of Austria. If they could change their view, no one would be better pleased than he. If there were now to be an accident in Austria, Italy would at present, for geographical reasons, be alone in meeting the danger.

Central Europe had been much divided on the question. The declaration of Rome had been an attempt to clarify the situation. Czechoslovakia and Roumania had now adhered to it, and Yugoslavia was on the point of doing so. Italy had also invited Hungary to adhere.

There were now happily, thanks to Signor Mussolini's approach to Yugoslavia, favourable prospects for the conclusion of the Pact. Signor Mussolini's draft ought to contain something about hastening its conclusion.

As regards the rearmament of the three disarmed Powers, he thought that if the Pact was concluded, and if it gave adequate guarantees to the Powers of the Little *Entente*, the rearmament question could be settled. They would thus have solved two problems, namely, the Austrian problem and that of the rearmament of the three disarmed Powers.

He therefore proposed to add a paragraph to Signor Mussolini's draft stating that, with a view to hastening the procedure for realising the Central European Pact, the three Powers had come to the conclusion that it would be desirable to hold at a very early date a meeting of representatives of all the Governments called upon to participate in its negotiation.

SIR JOHN SIMON observed that M. Laval admitted that the relation of His Majesty's Government to the proposal was not the same as that of the Continental States. His Majesty's Government wanted to support the pact but they could not contract into it. He doubted whether they could make so precise a declaration as was proposed by Signor Mussolini. They were giving full moral support, without taking part in detail.

M. LAVAL pointed out that they were not asking His Majesty's Government to do more than they had done in the past. They were merely asking them to confirm their earlier declarations.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he was a little afraid that if His Majesty's Government joined in the declaration in the same way as France and Italy, this might cause some misunderstanding.

MR. MACDONALD said that His Majesty's Government stood by their declaration, that the independence and integrity of Austria was an object of British policy. They wanted to be in the position of a State that blessed and approved without being committed further.

SIR JOHN SIMON suggested that Signor Mussolini's draft might be recast. Would it not be well also to include a statement that the three Powers took note of Herr Hitler's statement that the German Government would examine the draft of a pact of non-interference with a view to considering whether they could join in it?

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI suggested that this might be put into a communiqué as a statement which had been made to them by Sir John Simon.

M. LAVAL said that it was important not to confound this information with their intention to go on with the pact. The Little *Entente* would easily misunderstand. They ought not to subordinate the conclusion of the pact to the acceptance by Germany of a definition of non-interference which they well knew she would not accept.

MR. MACDONALD said that all he insisted on was that the status of Great Britain as regards the proposal should not be modified. Subject to this they had his hearty support.

It was agreed that Sir R. Vansittart, M. Léger and Signor Suvich should together work on Signor Mussolini's draft.

#### *Air Pact*

M. LAVAL said that the last paragraph of the Anglo-French communiqué dealing with the Air Pact had raised hopes in many countries, but the ill-will of Germany had hindered their satisfaction. The French Government had believed in the indivisibility of the programme, but Sir John Simon's visit to Berlin had shown that that programme was impossible of realisation.

He recalled that the French Government had suggested to both the British and Italian Governments that arrangements should be made to enjoy the benefits of the Air Pact pending the conclusion of the general settlement. Had those two Governments any opinions to express on this proposal? If they did not push on they were playing the game of Germany and of war. The French Delegation were ready to enter into details. They had made a careful technical study. But before proceeding, they would like to know the views of other Governments.

MR. MACDONALD said he could answer at once. His Majesty's Government were willing immediately to exchange views with the Locarno Powers with a view to seeing how far they could agree as to the organisation, the provisions and the coming into force of the pact.

M. LAVAL then circulated—

- (1) A draft of an Air Pact (Annex II).<sup>23</sup> This paper had already been communicated to Sir John Simon in Paris on the 28th February, 1935.

<sup>23</sup> Not here printed. See Annex to No. 517.

(2) Further papers making detailed proposals for the organisation of assistance under the Air Pact (Annexes III, IV and V).<sup>24</sup>

MR. MACDONALD said that these papers would, of course, require study.

SIR JOHN SIMON enquired whether France was prepared to give assistance to Italy.

M. LAVAL said the answer was yes. At the time of the London meeting this question had not been decided. Since then progress had been made.

There would be one exception, namely, the case where Germany did not attack Italy directly. If Germany attacked Austria, the case would be governed by the Central European Pact.

MR. MACDONALD enquired whether this question of the Air Pact could not be taken up through the usual channels.

M. LAVAL said he did not want to go into detail at once. He wanted agreement in principle, and the other Governments were willing to conclude an air pact.

He then referred to the third protocol to be annexed to the French draft air pact (Annex II). Germany by her action had rendered the London programme of no effect. France did not intend to remain without means of defence, and was therefore proposing bilateral agreements to assure her defence.

M. FLANDIN explained that there was nothing new in this. When they had come to Stresa they had thought the object had been to see an account of the various visits and to give effect to the Anglo-French declaration of the 3rd February. One of the matters set forth in that communiqué was the air pact. What was to become of the air pact now?

Was it to be considered as indivisible with the other matters set forth in the communiqué? Or were they to proceed with its further study? In the latter event, there was a draft which the French Government had already submitted to the other two Governments. Had they had time to examine it? What did they think of it? How did they wish to proceed? Now or later? By bilateral or general negotiations? Were there to be bilateral agreements amongst the Locarno Powers?

SIR J. SIMON said that the French draft of the 26th February had been carefully studied in London. He had before him a memorandum<sup>25</sup> on it. Before that draft had been received, an attempt had been made in London also to draw up a draft. He would be glad to communicate this draft to the other delegations (see Annex I to Record of Seventh Meeting). They would thus have two drafts before them.

It would, perhaps, be wise to go a little further and see whether it was possible to get agreement among the Locarno Powers in respect of a draft. It was necessary to visualise a meeting at which a representative of Germany would have to be present. If this was done and an attempt was made to settle the text, this did not mean that an agreement would be entered into before the other matters were settled.

<sup>24</sup> These Annexes are not reproduced.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. No. 529.

It would be difficult for His Majesty's Government to negotiate a bilateral agreement or an agreement among three Powers, because this would be contrary to the mutuality of the Locarno Treaty. It might be that they could not get an agreement as wide as Locarno. But an attempt ought certainly to be made, in the first instance, to reach a text which had this ambit.

M. LAVAL thought that before calling in Germany it would be best for Great Britain, France and Italy to agree upon a text to be submitted to Germany.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI agreed with M. Laval's proposal. They should work in common to produce a text, and then call upon Germany. To do this earlier might complicate the situation. The preliminary discussion should have sufficient latitude to allow of subsequent discussion with Germany.

SIR JOHN SIMON agreed that the next step should be for the three Powers to examine the drafts produced. He doubted whether discussion should be carried to the point of word for word agreement. If they found that a common scheme was emerging, it might be well at that point to try for a meeting of the Locarno Powers. The object would be to find out the terms in which the Pact would be expressed if it should come to be possible for them all to agree to it.

MR. MACDONALD said that it would be a mistake to leave Germany out until the three Powers had settled what was in their minds. Germany ought not to be given a chance of saying she knew nothing about it. A point would be reached, before final agreement was secured, when one of the parties might ask whether Germany had any views to express.

M. LAVAL saw no objection to this.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI suggested that a statement should be made at the Stresa Conference to the effect that the three Governments had decided to proceed among themselves to the study of a draft of the air pact foreshadowed in the London communiqué.

SIR ROBERT VANSITTART suggested the following as an alternative:—

'The representatives of the three Powers agreed to continue actively the study of the Air Pact contemplated in the London communiqué with a view to the eventual conclusion of an agreement between the Locarno Powers.'

M. FLANDIN said that this was a very important and delicate matter and he thought they would be wise to defer a decision until the following day.

It would be necessary to make clear whether or not the Air Pact was still considered to be an inseparable part of the whole programme of the London communiqué. Secondly, Germany ought not to be faced with a 'Diktat.' Thirdly, the other Powers must not be prevented from coming to bilateral agreements in advance.

### *Armaments*

M. FLANDIN said that he wished to ask a question. Was German rearmament a *fait acquis*,<sup>26</sup> and were disarmament negotiations to go on? He would

<sup>26</sup> i.e., an established fact.

be glad to know the views of His Majesty's Government as a matter of interest.

MR. MACDONALD said that in reply he would put another question to M. Flandin. Had M. Flandin discovered (Mr. MacDonald confessed that he had not) what definite action could be taken to challenge Herr Hitler's statement about armaments, short of the action which M. Flandin could be left to imagine?

M. FLANDIN said that he was in the same state of embarrassment. That was why he put the question. He would say, however, that if they accepted the fact, they must measure the consequences. Each must organise his security as best he could, by way of rearmament and by military agreements.

M. LAVAL said that it was difficult to accept the fact. But the essential point was to take action in order that the fact should not repeat itself.

France would assume her own responsibility, as in the Eastern Pact and the Central European Pact. Britain had blessed these proposals and France was gratified. If Germany knew that Britain encouraged France and that she could not count on Britain's indifference, a great step had been made.

France was ambitious to create a chain of peace. History showed that Britain only came in when the danger actually arose, and that she did not fail to come in. But for this reason the chain had to begin in Paris. France and Italy had come to an agreement at Rome. France would complete the chain by concluding an arrangement with Russia. If Signor Mussolini could rival the audacity of France and agree to make a pact of mutual assistance with Russia, it would be easier for Great Britain to play her part in whatever remained to be done in the organisation of peace. Germany would realise her position and would no longer be able to impose her own law in the face of countries united in the defence of peace.

MR. MACDONALD pointed out that though M. Laval said that he did not accept the situation, he, nevertheless, did when he indicated how he would act. He offered nothing which challenged it, but the consequences of his proposal to challenge it. His Majesty's Government were also considering the situation. Let it not be imagined that statements containing no reality and much idealism would enable them to face the future. It was necessary to come down to the realities of the situation, as the three Powers were now doing. It would be wrong to create an imaginary world of false security based on the assumption that the machine would work in all and every circumstance. Each should make the maximum contribution to the organisation of peace. His Majesty's Government were prepared to make their own maximum contribution. Perhaps not in the same form and perhaps not so apparently substantial as that of others.

The value of Stresa would be its demonstration of the unity of their common purpose. Nothing would divide the three Powers until the maximum measure of security had been effected. He could not say how this would be done. As a realist and experimentalist he believed that moral qualities would count. From the point of view of solidarity, the day had been a good one.

M. LAVAL welcomed Mr. MacDonald's declaration of solidarity. A declaration of this kind in the final act of Stresa would be well received by all the friends of peace.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI also attached great importance to Mr. MacDonald's statement. He welcomed his declaration of solidarity. He also agreed as to the undesirability of creating an impression of false security. In his own view, that form of security was false which was not based upon a solid political and military foundation.

M. FLANDIN said that he had not wished to put an indiscreet question. He had made his enquiry in that spirit of co-operation and complete frankness which was the basis of effective collaboration. He thanked Mr. MacDonald for his response.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

#### ANNEX I TO FOURTH MEETING

##### *Draft of a Resolution regarding Austria (Translation) (Communicated by the Head of the Italian Government, April 12, 1935)*

The Head of the Italian Government, the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the French President of the Council have examined the situation in Austria as it appears after the decree of the German Government of the 16th March.

They refer to and confirm the contents of the Anglo-French-Italian Declarations of the 17th February and the 27th September, 1934, by which the three Governments recognise the necessity of the maintenance and of the independence and integrity of Austria in conformity with the treaties in force and of continuing to inspire their common policy in accordance with these requirements;

They refer also to the contents of the Franco-Italian Protocol of Rome, the 7th January, 1935, and of the Anglo-French Declaration of the 3rd February, 1935, by which the three Governments decided to consult together on the measures to be taken should the integrity and independence of Austria be threatened; they confirm the anxiety for the earliest possible conclusion of the Danubian Pact of Non-interference provided for by the Rome Protocol and by the London Declarations; they decide to follow a common policy for the attainment of this end.

#### FIFTH MEETING, APRIL 13, 1935, AT 9.30 a.m.

##### *Draft Resolution for the Council*

Agreement was reached on the terms of the draft resolution in regard to the French appeal to the League in connexion with the repudiation by Germany of international obligations in regard to armaments (Annex I).<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Not printed. For the text of the Resolution as presented to the Council of the League of Nations by M. Laval on April 16, see *L.N.O.J.*, May 1935, pp. 551-2. Except for minor drafting amendments this text was identical with that in Annex I.



The only point which the experts of the three delegations had left outstanding was whether the word 'agreements' or the words 'regional undertakings' should be used in Section II. It was decided to say 'agreements.'

#### *Austria*

The meeting had before it a text (Annex II)<sup>28</sup> prepared by Sir R. Vansittart, M. Léger and Signor Suvich, of a statement for inclusion in the final report or record of the Conference. This text was approved after M. Laval had suggested the omission of the word 'non-interference' between the words 'European' and 'agreement' in the last sentence.

It was also agreed that a statement should be made to the press, similar to that made in connexion with the Eastern Pact, to the effect that Sir John Simon had informed the Conference that Germany had declared her willingness to examine the draft of a pact of non-interference in Central Europe with a view to considering whether she could join it.

#### *Armaments of Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria*

The meeting had before it a draft statement, prepared by the Italian Delegation, for inclusion in the final report or record of the Conference (Annex III).

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that there was not likely to be any unilateral action on the part of these three States. If these States had some hope of a change in their present situation by negotiation, it would be easier to bring Hungary into the Central European Pact and Bulgaria into the Balkan Pact. If some action was not taken, there might be a repetition of Germany's act. In that event it would be necessary either to accept the *fait accompli* or give the Little *Entente* a free hand, and this would probably mean war.

Surprises were to be expected in this dangerous region and it was therefore desirable for the three Great Powers to have a common opinion.

M. LAVAL said that M. Titulesco had recently shown him a paper prepared by the Little *Entente* at Bratislava from which it appeared that in the event of the unilateral violation of their disarmament obligations by the Central European Powers, the Little *Entente* would mobilise. He thought he had succeeded in convincing the Little *Entente* that if they showed a reasonable spirit a satisfactory solution of this rearmament question could be reached.

He could not agree that any mention should be made in the final act of the Conference of the possibility of the rearmament of the three disarmed Powers.

<sup>28</sup> Not printed. The text as approved was identical with that in paragraph 3 of the Final Communiqué (see note 44 below) which read as follows: 'The Representatives of the three Governments examined afresh the Austrian situation. They confirmed the Anglo-Franco-Italian declarations of the 17th February and the 27th September, 1934, in which the three Governments recognised that the necessity of maintaining the independence and integrity of Austria would continue to inspire their common policy. Referring to the Franco-Italian protocol of the 7th January, 1935, and to the Anglo-French declarations of the 3rd February, 1935, in which the decision was reaffirmed to consult together as to the measures to be taken in the case of threats to the integrity and independence of Austria, they agreed to recommend that Representatives of all the Governments enumerated in the protocol of Rome should meet at a very early date with a view to concluding the Central European agreement.'

He would propose that he and the Italian representative should begin at Geneva in the following week to explore this question orally with the representatives of the countries concerned.

MR. MACDONALD said that he agreed with Signor Mussolini's proposal and hoped that the matter would be pursued at Geneva.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that the question was certain to be asked both by the press and in the House of Commons whether the subject of the rearmament of the three Powers had been considered at Stresa. That question would have to be answered.

MR. MACDONALD said that he did not want to have to say anything in the House which would hamper the French Government, but M. Laval would realise that he would have to say something.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that it was desirable to offer some counterpart to Hungary and Bulgaria in order to help them to accede respectively to the Central European and Balkan Pacts. The present opportunity should be seized in order to state the principle that the desires of the three disarmed countries could be settled by legitimate and contractual means. France should try to moderate the Little *Entente*, and Italy should try to bring Austria and Hungary nearer the Central European Pact.

If M. Laval's attitude was adopted and all mention of this question was omitted, that would lead nowhere. His own proposal ought not to arouse any fears in the minds of the Little *Entente*; and in order to give hope to the disarmed States he wished to avoid unilateral repudiation.

M. LAVAL said that he thought the Italian proposal impracticable and dangerous. Impracticable because Article 19 required unanimity. Dangerous because the Little *Entente* would not recognise any conclusions reached at Stresa in their absence.

He had been carrying on negotiations day in and day out with the representatives of the Little *Entente* and had done his best to persuade them that the present situation as regards the disarmament of the three Powers could not continue indefinitely. He had reason to believe that if they could be given security under the Central European Pact, they would be prepared to come to a settlement about rearmament.

If any such statement was issued before the French appeal came before the Council, he would be placed in a most embarrassing position. The effect of the statement would be to give approbation to unilateral repudiation.

If the Conference desired to make failure of the Central European Pact an absolute certainty, the best way would be to support Signor Mussolini's draft.

SIGNOR SUVICH pointed out that everyone knew that this question was being discussed at Stresa. The draft was based upon the principle of equality of rights in a system of security. The rights of the Little *Entente* were fully protected by the provision that the settlement would be reached by the negotiation of a Convention.

If M. Laval thought the reference to Article 19 objectionable, this could be omitted.

M. LAVAL said that he had to consider the well-known susceptibilities of the Little *Entente*; this was regrettable, but it was a fact. He recalled their violent objection to the Four-Power Pact.<sup>29</sup>

His objection was really one of expediency and not one of substance. As to the principle, he was in entire agreement with Signor Mussolini. What he could not do was to impose something on the Little *Entente* in their absence. The solution he would suggest would be that a statement should be made to the Press rather than included in the official acts of the Conference. The statement might be to the effect that the three Governments realised the importance of pushing on with the negotiations for the Central European Pact and recognised that this would have consequences for the armaments of the ex-enemy Powers. But in view of the absence of certain other interested Powers, they should stop at that.

The three disarmed Powers would have the moral satisfaction of knowing that while the three Powers considered the question of new guarantees of security for all, they had not omitted to consider also the possibility of a modification of the disarmament clauses.

He could not accept the draft. To do so would be a breach of his word to the Little *Entente*, whose interests he must defend. As an alternative, he would suggest a communication to the various Powers through the diplomatic channel, rather than a statement to the Press.

MR. MACDONALD asked what would be the gist of such a communication.

M. LAVAL said that it might be to the effect that if security were obtained through the Central European Pact, it would be opportune to consider the possibility of a modification of the military clauses of the treaties by free negotiation among the interested Parties.

MR. MACDONALD said that while he agreed with Signor Mussolini's proposal, his only concern was that when he made the statement in the House of Commons, which he was bound to make, this statement should be fully in accord with the views of the other two Governments.

SIGNOR SUVICH thought that the question at issue was somewhat wider than that of the relations between the disarmed Powers and the Little *Entente*. Germany had committed a unilateral act of repudiation which, though condemned, was a *fait accompli*. She would have her 36 divisions, and nothing could be done about it.

There were other Powers in the same situation. No one wished them to follow the same procedure. The proposal was that they should rearm under a convention. If nothing were done to help them, they would conclude that Germany had adopted the right tactics.

M. LAVAL stated that the difference between him and Signor Mussolini was a mere matter of procedure. The proposal was that a communication should be sent at once to all the interested Powers.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI understood that the feelings of the Little *Entente* had to be considered, but they certainly exaggerated. They had 44 million inhabitants against 20 millions, and were heavily armed.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Volume V, No. 84.

M. LAVAL said that Turkey had also to be considered. In reply to Signor Mussolini's question why this was so, he replied that it was because of the position of Bulgaria.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that Turkey would have to choose between Europe and Asia. If Turkey was with the Little *Entente*, the danger to the latter was still less.

As regards the various suggestions made by M. Laval that of press indiscretions was the worst. It would merely trouble the waters. If, on the other hand, diplomatic communications were made the facts would be known in 24 hours. By a process of elimination he concluded that his own original proposal was the best. If M. Titulescu had his paper (*i.e.*, the agreement signed at Bratislava),<sup>30</sup> the three Powers at Stresa had the right to have their paper. He was prepared to modify his draft by omitting the last phrase dealing with future negotiations.

It was important to consider the situation of Austria. The German act of the 16th March had had great influence in Austria, and had strongly increased the influence of the Nazis. Austria wished for good relations with the Little *Entente*, and that was why he pressed his present proposal. Bulgaria, after her periodical military crises, required a long period of quiet. Hungary (who had 9 million people against 40 millions) did not desire to repudiate her obligations by unilateral action. But there was a new fact, namely, the recent crushing victory gained by General Gömbös.<sup>31</sup> The real danger was that there might be a new unilateral repudiation which would have grave consequences.

M. LAVAL assured Signor Mussolini that when he was in communication with the Little *Entente* he strongly supported Signor Mussolini's thesis. But it was quite impossible for him to accept the resolution for inclusion in the final report or communiqué of the conference.

He agreed that the method of press indiscretions was objectionable, but he maintained that the diplomatic method was the best. He did not mind if there were leakages. The method he was pursuing with the Little *Entente* for the success of further negotiations was he thought the best.

SIR JOHN SIMON observed that one decision they would have to reach at once was how to deal with a question which would probably be asked, certainly in the House of Commons at any rate, namely, had this subject been considered at Stresa? Was the answer to be that the wish expressed by the three disarmed Powers had been one of the subjects passed in review and seriously discussed, but that in view of the absence of other interested Powers, no decision had been reached? This was a possible answer, but he wondered what its effect would be.

SIR R. VANSITTART said that even before that there would be questions from the Press at Stresa.

M. LAVAL said he thought the answer should be that the question was discussed at Stresa, and that the three Powers had entered into diplomatic communication on the subject.

<sup>30</sup> See p. 893 above.

<sup>31</sup> A reference to the results of the general election recently held in Hungary; cf. *The Times*, April 2, p. 15.

The question ought certainly to be examined, but it affected other Powers not represented at Stresa, who were equally entitled to their security.

If it was asked in the House of Commons what was the attitude of France, the answer would be that France had agreed that the desire of the three Powers should be taken into account, but had insisted on the necessity of finding security before agreeing to modification.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI observed that the conference had dealt with many matters affecting many countries which were not there represented.

He wondered why they could not have the courage to express a view on this question also, as they were ready to express views on other questions figuring on the agenda.

M. LAVAL observed that questions like the Eastern Pact and the Central European Pact were in rather a different class. They had been the subject of prolonged international consultation already.

Signor Mussolini must not think that he did everything which the Little *Entente* required of him. Before he left for Stresa they had told him not to let the Stresa conference pass without settling the question of the Hapsburgs. He had refused to raise this question.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that he had no objection to its being raised.

M. LAVAL said that if Signor Mussolini would give him a paper condemning the restoration of the Hapsburgs, he himself would have courage to give Signor Mussolini a paper about rearmament.

He begged Signor Mussolini not to place him in a position in which he would be unable to continue the negotiations on which he had already embarked.

He still thought the diplomatic method was the best.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI thought that the difference of opinion on procedure might conceal a difference of opinion on substance. In the communication to be made through the diplomatic channel, were they to say that they were agreed as to the substance of the question, or were they merely to say that they had discussed it? The communication to the various Governments would either be unequivocal, in which case it would be equivalent to a public resolution; or it would be equivocal, in which case it would create the impression that there was no agreement on the substance of the question.

M. LAVAL then submitted a text in the following terms:—

‘The Conference took note of the desire expressed by the States disarmed by virtue of the Treaties of Saint-Germain, Trianon and Neuilly, to obtain the revision of their military status.

‘The three Governments declared their agreement to inform the other interested States accordingly by the diplomatic channel.

‘They similarly found themselves in agreement to recommend to the interested States the examination of this question, with a view to its regulation by common accord within the scope of the general and regional guarantees of security in Central Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean.’

SIR R. VANSITTART then observed that the draft said nothing about the consideration of the armaments question at a conference.

M. LAVAL said that the conference was referred to in the declaration about Austria.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that this conference could probably meet in May.

M. LAVAL said that on that occasion the interested States could discuss the question of the rearmament of the three disarmed Powers and find a solution.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that he still could not understand why this question was being excluded from the final report of the Conference and confined to a diplomatic communication.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that if they relied solely upon a diplomatic communication they would still be faced with the question from the press as to whether the subject had been discussed. Could not the final report of the Conference include a statement to the effect that the question of the wish expressed by the States disarmed by treaty to have some adjustment in their armaments had been passed under review; that this was a question which involved certain other Governments; that, in particular, it involved those invited to meet at an early date to conclude a Central European pact? The decision of the Stresa Conference would be to communicate with those Governments with a view to having the armaments question discussed at that meeting.

This would provide some protection against the dangerous developments of which Signor Mussolini had warned them.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that this formula still left the question of principle outside, namely that the desire of the Powers to have a change in their situation was reasonable, provided it was made in a legitimate way.

M. LAVAL thought that Sir John Simon's proposal was a wise one. He could not go further without consulting the States of the Little *Entente* and the Balkan *Entente*.

In conversation with representatives of the Little *Entente* he spent his time acting as the ambassador of Italy. He appealed to Signor Mussolini to help him now. He would lose half his weight with the Little *Entente* if he accepted Signor Mussolini's text.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI repeated that differences of view on procedure concealed differences of view on the substance. They would be asked whether they had reached a common opinion or whether they had limited themselves to a triple diplomatic communication. The Conference was seeking to realise a common agreement on all the questions before it. That was what mattered, not a communiqué.

M. LAVAL said that he could not do anything to promote the conclusion of the Central European Pact unless they created a better atmosphere by making new security arrangements. He assured Signor Mussolini that he was doing his best to use his authority to create order in Central Europe.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that he had tried his hand at a text in the following terms:—

"The three Powers are in complete accord in confirming their protests against the unilateral action of Germany in disregarding treaty limitations on her armaments, and declare that the legitimate method, *the*

*possibility of which they admit in principle for all the States disarmed by Treaty, is that of conventions to be concluded between the interested States.*

'Inasmuch as the question of the modification of the armaments of other States has been raised by them but a conventional solution of this question involves other States, the three Powers propose that the solution of this question should be reached at the meeting to take place at a very early date for concluding the Central European agreement and that in the meantime it should be the subject of diplomatic communication.'

The point he urged was that the unilateral action of Germany which they all condemned should be fitted in with the only legal method, which was the modification of armaments of the ex-enemy States by way of agreement. He would propose that this statement should be issued from the Stresa Conference.

M. LAVAL said he could not agree to Sir John Simon's text. If it were adopted he would find it quite impossible to put through his resolution at Geneva. The representatives of the Little *Entente* and the Balkan *Entente* would be incensed against him. He could not agree that they should be apprised of such a decision by an act of the Conference.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said he thought Sir John Simon's draft a good one. M. Laval would not avoid trouble by rejecting it. M. Laval had strong cards to play at Geneva and could have his way by playing them. M. Laval had said that he knew from experience what the reaction of the Little *Entente* would be. He thought M. Laval conceded too much to those reactions.

SIR JOHN SIMON enquired whether M. Laval proposed that any statement should be made from Stresa at all.

M. LAVAL said that he could agree to a communiqué in the press to the effect that the matter had been considered.

SIGNOR SUVICH thought Sir John Simon's draft very interesting. It made a declaration of principle based on the ideas of the London communiqué; and it suggested a solution by reference to the proposed Central European Conference.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said he thought Sir John Simon's text was clearer than M. Laval's.

M. LAVAL said it was too clear for him.

It was agreed that the draft of a statement on the subject of armaments of the three disarmed Powers should be referred to a Drafting Committee.

### *Demilitarised Zone*

During a conversation regarding the topics that still remained for the Conference to consider, M. Laval raised the question of the demilitarised zone, and said he wished to communicate to the Conference some information about the demilitarised zone in the Rhineland which he had just received from the French Representative at Cologne. M. Laval subsequently circulated a paper containing this information, a copy of which is annexed (Annex IV).

### *Further Procedure*

Some discussion then took place upon the question of a final communiqué which would close the Conference.

SIR JOHN SIMON thought it important that the text of this communiqué should be carefully considered.

It was agreed that a drafting Committee should be appointed to frame this final communiqué and incorporate in it the various texts agreed upon during the discussions.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

### ANNEX III TO FIFTH MEETING

#### *Rearmament of Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria Italian Proposal, April 13, 1935*

(Translation.)

The three Governments, taking note of the wish expressed by the other States disarmed by Treaty to obtain equality of rights in the matter of armaments—

Declare that they admit in principle the possibility of satisfying this desire by the method of conventions to be concluded between the interested States;

And they are ready to begin forthwith negotiations for this purpose on the basis of Article 19 of the Covenant.

### ANNEX IV TO FIFTH MEETING

*Communicated by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, April 13, 1935*

(Translation.)

COLOGNE, *April 12, 1935*

Reports from a number of absolutely sure sources reveal the following facts:—

- (1) Strengthening of the Landespolizei at Dusseldorf.
- (2) Evacuation in the eastern districts of Cologne of four barracks in which poor families have been living since the Armistice.
- (3) Establishment of arms and munitions dépôts near the fortress of (name illegible).
- (4) Intensive training of the Rhenish para-military formations; rifle and machine-gun training and field service for all classes of the Hitler Jugend, starting from the last class. The Wohnnerheide a few kilometres from Cologne has become a huge military camp, where barracks and rifle ranges are being constructed and where more than 10,000 men are drilling on Sundays. The Dusseldorf S.A. brigade, numbering 6,000 men, is highly trained.
- (5) Construction of fortifications to the west of Coblenz.
- (6) Activity of military aviation has been doubled during the last month; flying training every day; night flying of military aircraft in sections



of ten over the demilitarised zone; posting in Cologne aerodrome of some 100 recruits as aeroplane mechanics or pilot pupils; establishment at Cologne of a sector Air Command under the orders of a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Air Force, Police Section.

- (7) Motorised units of the Reichswehr were on the 12th April in the neighbourhood of Dusseldorf.

Thus, the pace of the military reoccupation of the Rhineland is being accelerated and there is a danger that very soon we may find ourselves faced with the *fait accompli* of a reoccupation, complete perhaps and covered only by the pretence that the troops will not bear the name or the uniform of the Reichswehr.

One of the chief foreign policy correspondents of the *Cologne Gazette* admits that this state of affairs may induce Germany to denounce the Locarno Agreements at the first opportunity.

It is desirable also to state that the spirit of the population has changed in the last month in a most marked manner; from being peaceful it has become arrogant. In the Rhineland people have suddenly recognised that Germany was playing a dangerous game; but it is against France that the anger of the public, which feels that it has been deceived, is concentrated. Anxiety is counterbalanced only by the hope which the divisions and weaknesses of the Western Powers inspire and by confidence in the growing strength of Germany.

#### SIXTH MEETING, APRIL 13, 1935, AT 4 p.m.

##### *Air Pact*

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI read out the formula proposed by the United Kingdom delegation in the following terms:—

‘The representatives of the three Powers agreed to continue actively the study of the air pact contemplated in the London communiqué with a view to the eventual conclusion of an agreement between the Locarno Powers.’

He also read an alternative French formula which was as follows:—

‘The three Governments having noted the studies already undertaken on the subject of the draft for an air agreement concerning Western Europe,

‘Confirming that they are agreed on the principles and procedure that should be followed, envisaged in the London communiqué of the 3rd February,

‘Decide to proceed without delay to the completion of the draft of the Air Pact and of the bilateral agreements which would be its consequence.’

M. FLANDIN repeated the criticisms of this draft which he had expressed at the previous meeting. Any statement on the subject of the air pact ought to make it clear that studies had been going on; and ought to make it possible

for the Governments concerned to conclude bilateral agreements within the framework of the pact. The British draft did not meet these points.

SIR JOHN SIMON agreed with M. Flandin's first point, which he thought was met by the word 'continue' which appeared in his draft. The British draft was also more accurate on this point than was the French draft. It could not be said that the Governments had noted the studies already undertaken. He was not aware that the Italian Government had communicated any document about the air pact. He himself had not had time to read the papers communicated at an earlier meeting by M. Laval. As regards the second paragraph he ought to say that the time had not come for His Majesty's Government to declare that they had decided to proceed with the drafting of bilateral agreements. He did not preclude the possibility of this development; but His Majesty's Government could not make any such statement at Stresa.

His Majesty's Government had explained and defended the proposed air pact as being an instrument giving precision to the Locarno Treaty. The essence of Locarno was that it was mutual and not bilateral. It would be difficult for His Majesty's Government to say that as a result of the Stresa meeting they had decided to draft bilateral agreements. This would be looking too far ahead. He could not see how such a statement could be defended in Parliament.

They had come to Stresa to discuss the various matters set forth in the London communiqué. He was willing to say that they would continue to study the air pact; but he could not, in the absence of the other Locarno Powers, say that the Stresa meeting had resulted in the transformation of the air pact (which had been represented to the British people as an application of Locarno) into a series of bilateral treaties.

He could agree to insert paragraph 2 of the French draft in the earlier part of his own draft.

M. FLANDIN said that he did not quite agree with Sir John Simon's description of the Air Pact as a mere development of Locarno. If it was only this, there was no reason for France to give to Great Britain the promise of assistance which she had not given in Locarno. This was the reason why no allusion was made to Locarno in the London communiqué. As regards bilateral pacts, Italy and Great Britain would need to conclude a bilateral arrangement to settle the conditions of the application of the Pact as between them.

The text now proposed by Sir John Simon receded a step. It was not right to give a restricted interpretation of the London communiqué. The London communiqué did not refer to Locarno and, in fact, the proposed Air Pact went beyond Locarno at any rate as regards France, in that it gave France specific protection against air attacks. There was no justification for the reference in the British draft to the Locarno Powers.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that M. Flandin's remarks about the word 'Locarno' were justified, and he was prepared to delete the words at the end of the draft referring to the Locarno Powers.

But he would observe that his proposal did not really turn upon the use of the word 'Locarno.'

Did the London communiqué contemplate a series of bilateral agreements or a single mutual agreement? The communiqué spoke of the pact as 'a reciprocal regional agreement.' In the London communiqué the two Powers resolved to invite Italy, Germany and Belgium to consider with them whether such a convention might not be promptly negotiated. His Majesty's Government had carried British opinion up to the point of promising its own air force in express terms under a reciprocal assurance. His Majesty's Government most deeply appreciated the arrangements the French Government were prepared to make for the protection of Great Britain, but they had told Parliament that what was proposed was a multilateral agreement. It was not possible for them at this stage to transform a proposal for a multilateral mutual arrangement into one for a bilateral agreement.

He did not exclude the possibility that things might so develop as to make this change necessary, but they could not then and there make that one of the decisions of the Stresa Conference.

M. FLANDIN said that he did not challenge Sir John Simon's argument. The reference in the French draft to bilateral arrangements certainly went beyond the scope of the London communiqué. The fact was that, since the 3rd February, grave events had occurred. On that date the German air force did not officially exist. Since then it had been revealed as a grave danger. The four-branch system foreshadowed in the London communiqué had at Stresa been recognised as dead. Were they not justified in now trying to go a little further? If His Majesty's Government thought they could not go any further, he must bow. But, in that event, he would say this, that if His Majesty's Government took their stand strictly upon the basis of the London communiqué with no reference to the possibility of bilateral agreements, it would be better that the Stresa Conference should say nothing at all about the Air Pact. If Stresa made no advance upon the London communiqué, the reaction in France would be very great. Germany had become a danger. The London system had been broken up and yet nothing was being put in its place.

He wanted to try for bilateral arrangements within the Pact, but he did not wish to be hindered by the idea that a general pact was being discussed when he would conclude that such a general pact was not realisable.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI thought that, if the statement about the Air Pact was without substance, this would create some disillusion. The same would be true if nothing was said. According to his information, the Germans now had 2,500 military machines, at the end of 1935 they would have 5,000, in May 1936 they would have 6,000. They were planning to build fifteen machines a day. They now had the most modern fleet in the world.

He asked Sir John Simon what exactly Herr Hitler had said about the Air Pact.

SIR JOHN SIMON replied that he had said in substance that the German Government favoured the suggestion for an air pact to be concluded between the five Powers.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that he could accept the French text.

M. FLANDIN observed that His Majesty's Government would remain free to conclude or not to conclude bilateral arrangements, according as they desired.

At this point the meeting was suspended to allow the members of the United Kingdom Delegation to consult together.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI read a new draft prepared by the United Kingdom Delegation (Annex I).<sup>32</sup>

SIR JOHN SIMON said that in this text the British Ministers were making an effort to help and were going to the extreme limit of what they felt they could do. He agreed that the grave situation existing in Europe might be found to justify some development which had not been expressly contemplated when they had met in London. It was only from a deep desire to meet the wishes of their French colleagues that they had brought themselves to use the phrase 'bilateral agreements.'

If this draft were accepted, the Prime Minister and he were prepared to take the responsibility of putting it forward.

It borrowed certain phrases from the French draft. It spoke of the five Powers and not of the Locarno Powers and it mentioned bilateral agreements.

If this draft was not acceptable, it would be better to let the matter drop.

M. FLANDIN said that, while the draft did not give him full satisfaction, he was grateful for it and had no difficulty in accepting it.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI associated himself with what M. Flandin had said.

M. LAVAL observed that the best thing for them all to do would be to build as many aeroplanes as possible of the best possible quality.

#### *Armaments*

SIR JOHN SIMON thought that the Stresa meeting ought not to close without considering the question of armaments.

He recalled what had recently happened at Berlin. He had protested against Germany's recent act as regards armaments. Herr Hitler had said that Germany was prepared to agree not to possess any arms or types of arms which other Powers also agreed not to possess; but she claimed to possess all arms possessed by other Powers.

He had asked whether the German Government was prepared to agree that they would not provide themselves with arms such as heavy guns, which they did not at present possess, if others would undertake not to manufacture any more. The reply had been in the negative. But the Chancellor had said that Germany would agree to abandon such arms as soon as other Powers abandoned what they at present possessed.

<sup>32</sup> Not printed. This draft was identical with the text in paragraph 4 of the Final Communiqué which read as follows: 'As regards the proposed Air Pact for Western Europe, the Representatives of the three Governments confirmed the principles and procedure that should be followed as envisaged in the London communiqué of the 3rd February, and agreed to continue actively the study of the question with a view to the drafting of a pact between the five Powers mentioned in the London communiqué and of any bilateral agreements which might accompany it.'

MR. MACDONALD observed that in the meantime Germany would proceed to manufacture such arms, and would destroy them later if agreement was reached to abandon them.

SIR JOHN SIMON added that Germany was also ready to join in applying the system of permanent and automatic supervision provided that such a system was applied to other countries also.

That was the position.

They would be open to reproach if they omitted to consider it.

M. LAVAL said that what Sir John Simon had said confirmed what he himself had anticipated in a note which he had given to Mr. Eden and Signor Suvich in Paris.<sup>33</sup> It also confirmed what the German Ambassador himself had told him in Paris. There was, so far as he could see, nothing to be done. He had hoped that the Germans might have been prepared to allow the French to retain the small superiority they still possessed in military material. But that was not the case.

On the other hand if it were proposed to limit construction for the future, the French Government would see no objection, provided there was strict supervision.

MR. MACDONALD asked what could be said of an effective nature in relation to the Disarmament Conference. It would be a mistake for the Stresa Conference to close down the Disarmament Conference. Might not the best line be to observe that the latest German action had placed grave difficulties in the way of the Disarmament Conference and had upset the peace [of] mind of Europe upon which the success of the Disarmament Conference depended, and to transmit to the President of the Disarmament Conference the various statements made by the German Chancellor?

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said it was difficult to talk about disarmament at this stage. They might perhaps say that the Conference had been stricken by paralysis as a result of German rearmament. Some people still had courage to hope for something from the Conference, but he himself had none. Perhaps something might be done in the way of limitation, on the basis of relative proportions.

SIR JOHN SIMON recalled that the London communiqué did not contain the word 'disarmament,' but spoke of 'agreements regarding armaments.' He agreed that the best hope was for some arrangement for limitation. Limitation of material would be difficult. But was it not perhaps possible that there might be some reduction in German effectives? Herr Hitler's figure was so large that in a negotiation for agreement it must be modified.

Perhaps the communiqué might say that the Conference had before it Herr Hitler's declarations on the subject of German armaments, and felt that these had gravely prejudiced the prospect of an arms agreement; and that a report of what Herr Hitler had said should be transmitted to the President of the Disarmament Conference, rather than discussed at Stresa.

M. LAVAL thought that there were circumstances in which it was wiser to say nothing at all for the sake of dignity.

<sup>33</sup> See Annex 2 to the Foreign Office Memorandum of April 4, 1935 (No. 696).

MR. MACDONALD said that it all depended on how it was said. Might it not be stated that Germany had destroyed all the work done in attempting to build up a system of peace? Such a statement might be calm and dignified and tell nothing but the stark truth. Germany might, as M. Laval suggested, laugh at it; but he knew the effect it would have in Great Britain.

M. LAVAL entirely agreed with this proposal. If a solemn protest was made by the three Governments in some such terms as Mr. MacDonald had suggested, Germany would not laugh.

MR. MACDONALD promised that the United Kingdom Delegation would draft a statement on the lines he had suggested and submit it for consideration later.

### *Memel*

SIR JOHN SIMON reminded the French and Italian Ministers that on the 30th March His Majesty's Government had communicated with the French and Italian Governments<sup>34</sup> pointing out that the Lithuanian Government, whatever their excuses and whatever their difficulties, were, in fact, not complying with the Memel Convention in that there was no Directorate in Memel enjoying the confidence of the Diet. This had been made a matter of complaint by Germany,<sup>35</sup> in which Germany had a well-founded grievance. That was unfortunate, as the three Powers were, together with Japan, those in whose hands had been placed the framing of the Memel Convention.

The Memel Convention required that the Executive enjoyed the confidence of the Diet. The present Executive had not the confidence of the Diet. The Directorate had suspended the sittings of the Diet.

His Majesty's Government were greatly concerned lest if some action were not taken, Germany would use the situation as a reason for herself taking action. His Majesty's Government had proposed that the three Powers should inform the Lithuanian Government that, unless they secured an Executive in Memel having the confidence of the Diet before the end of March, the three Powers would bring the matter before the Council.

Sir John Simon said that he had been questioned on this subject in the House of Commons by Sir Austen Chamberlain and he read the text of the question and answer.<sup>36</sup> The point now at issue was whether they could agree upon common action. Action would have to be taken in common or not at all, as the responsibility of the three Governments was equal.

Their main preoccupation was that Germany might use the situation for further irregular acts. He wished to ask the French and Italian Ministers what their view was. Did they wish to leave the matter alone or to deal with it? If they wished to deal with it, did they agree with the British suggestion? If not, how would they propose to meet the danger?

M. LAVAL said that the Lithuanian Minister in Paris had informed him that the German complaints were not founded. He pretended that the Deputies could not sit because the Germans told them not to. The German

<sup>34</sup> See No. 671.

<sup>35</sup> See No. 230, note 3.

<sup>36</sup> See 300 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 990-1 (April 9).

Ambassador, on the other hand, said that if the Deputies took their seats, they would be arrested. He had warned the Lithuanian Minister in strong terms that the present situation could not go on.

The Lithuanian Government had, however, recently changed the Governor of Memel and appointed a person who was likely to make a serious effort at conciliation. That was one positive development.

Another was the passage in the Lithuanian reply (of which he had still only a summary) which gave an assurance that the Lithuanian Government would ensure collaboration between the Directorate and the Diet.<sup>37</sup>

He thought the best thing would be for the three Governments to exchange views as to the new situation and get reports from their Ministers in Kovno. Further information was needed before they could come to the Council.

There was no doubt that German action in some fashion explained the Lithuanian reaction.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI thought the position was one of great danger. The Lithuanians were excessively obstinate. The German Ambassador had been again and again to see him. He himself had warned the Lithuanian Government that if the Kovno sentences<sup>38</sup> were carried into effect, the consequences might be dangerous.

He thought that a further *démarche* should be made at Kovno to clear up the situation, and if it was not rapidly cleared up it might be desirable to approach the Council.

SIR JOHN SIMON said that on the merits of the case it should not be forgotten that a committee of British, French and Italian jurists had investigated the complaints made against Lithuania and had made a unanimous report that the charges were well-founded and constituted a breach of the Constitution.

He would observe that it was not the German deputies who had absented themselves from the Diet, but the Lithuanian deputies. So long as they refrained from attending there could be no quorum. In addition to constant visits from the German Ambassador, he had also received a report from His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin, who viewed the situation with grave anxiety and thought that if, after Stresa, the situation was still unaltered the arguments used by the Germans in favour of their taking action themselves would be reinforced.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> The reference was to the Lithuanian Government's reply to the Anglo-French-Italian *démarche* of March 13 (cf. No. 671, note 2). The full text of the reply was received in the Foreign Office on April 9 as enclosure in Kovno despatch No. 37 of April 5. The gist of the reply had been sent in Kovno telegram No. 22 of April 5. In a minute dated April 29 (N 1995/19/59) Mr. Grey, a member of the Northern Department, wrote: 'the Lithuanian Govt. simply promise to "employ all their efforts with a view to realising the desire of the signatory Powers in regard to the collaboration of the Directorate and Chamber". This is very different from the undertaking attributed to them by M. Laval.'

<sup>38</sup> Cf. No. 651, note 21.

<sup>39</sup> e.g., in Berlin telegram No. 144 of April 7, Sir E. Phipps said: 'I earnestly hope that the opportunity of the Stresa Conference will be used to urge upon other signatory Powers the absolute necessity of avoiding giving Herr Hitler any excuse to use force in this region [Memelland]. This seems to be a case where Germans are more sinned against than

Finally, the representatives of the three Powers were at Stresa in order to demonstrate their solidarity. They wished Germany to take note of the effectiveness of that solidarity and to be warned thereby.

Germany would not be much impressed if they could not bring a petty State like Lithuania back to legality. Germany would ask what their solidarity was worth. They were the three Governments responsible for Memel, and they were unable to secure that the Lithuanians should observe the conditions upon which the territory passed under Lithuanian sovereignty.

If they could show that they could put the Memel situation in order, they would furnish the strongest argument that Germany had no right whatever to take matters into her own hands.

He was glad to hear from Signor Mussolini that, if the situation was not improved, he would agree that the matter should be referred to the League. He thought M. Laval was in favour of this course also.

Was not the proper course to send a communication immediately to the Lithuanian Government to the effect that, having reviewed the situation at Stresa, the three Powers would be obliged to bring the matter before the League unless the situation was corrected? He did not press for any time-limit to be stated.

M. LAVAL accepted without reserve Sir John Simon's analysis of the situation and the solution he proposed.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI also agreed.

It was agreed that identic telegrams should be sent from Stresa to the Ministers of the three Powers at Kovno, instructing them to make a joint communication to the Lithuanian Government in the sense suggested.

It was agreed that Sir William Malkin should be asked to prepare the draft of the required communication. (See Record of Seventh Meeting.)

M. LAVAL remarked that one of the uses of Memel was to teach Poland the dangers of too great a love for Germany.

### *Demilitarised Zone*

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that what had to be faced was the danger of a violation in respect of the demilitarised zone. The Locarno Treaties provided for that contingency. It was suggested that Great Britain and Italy should confirm their engagements under the Locarno Treaty by a declaration to be issued at Stresa. It was desirable to take position in anticipation of possible developments.

SIR JOHN SIMON circulated the proposed text of such a statement (Annex II).<sup>40</sup>

sinning, and unless Lithuania can be made to show strict respect for the statute Herr Hitler will . . . in all probability proceed to violent measures. In that case a large proportion of world opinion would, and perhaps rightly, support him. The continued failure of the signatory Powers to induce Lithuania to carry out her contractual obligations also provides Germany with a useful argument against the system of collective guarantees generally.'

<sup>40</sup> Not printed. The text was identical with that of the Anglo-Italian Declaration in the Final Communiqué which read as follows: 'The following joint Declaration was made by the Representatives of Italy and the United Kingdom in reference to the Treaty of Locarno:



SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that he accepted the text.

M. FLANDIN accepted it and expressed his gratitude.

M. LAVAL said that it would have a profound effect in France and would earn the gratitude of the whole French people.

M. FLANDIN suggested that the Locarno declaration should be published separately from the rest of the Stresa communiqué, otherwise it would be buried. Could it not be published at once and reproduced later in the final act of the conference?

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI thought that the Locarno statement should be placed in the main body of the report of the conference. It was so important that it could not possibly be overlooked. The report would then present a complete picture of what had been done.

It was agreed that no mention should be made to the press of the existence of the Locarno statement until the issue of the final communiqué on the following day.

#### *Declaration of Solidarity*

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI produced a text which it was agreed should be studied and further considered at the next meeting.

(The meeting then adjourned.)

SEVENTH MEETING, APRIL 14, 1935, AT 10 a.m.

#### *Air Pact*

Copies of the United Kingdom draft of the Air Convention<sup>41</sup> were handed privately to the French and Italian Delegations (Annex I).

#### *Armaments*

The United Kingdom draft statement (Annex II)<sup>42</sup> on this subject was read.

—The Representatives of Italy and of the United Kingdom, the Powers which participate in the Treaty of Locarno only in the capacity of guarantors, formally reaffirm all their obligations under that Treaty, and declare their intention, should the need arise, faithfully to fulfil them. Inasmuch as the two Powers have entered into these obligations in relation to all the other parties to the Treaty of Locarno, this joint declaration, which has been made at the Stresa Conference in which France is participating, will also be formally communicated to the Governments of Germany and Belgium.'

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Fourth Meeting, p. 88g.

<sup>42</sup> Not printed. The draft was identical with the text in paragraph 5 of the Final Communiqué which read as follows: 'In approaching the problem of armaments, the Representatives of the three Powers recalled that the London communiqué envisaged an agreement to be freely negotiated with Germany to take the place of the relevant clauses of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, and took into careful and anxious consideration the recent action of the German Government and the report furnished by Sir John Simon of his conversations with the German Chancellor on this subject. It was regretfully recognised that the method of unilateral repudiation adopted by the German Government, at a moment when steps were being taken to promote a freely negotiated settlement of the question of armaments, had undermined public confidence in the security of a peaceful order. Moreover, the magnitude of the declared programme of German rearmament, already well in

M. FLANDIN approved the draft.

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI approved the draft.

It was subsequently agreed at M. Flandin's suggestion to omit the final paragraph referring to the President of the Disarmament Conference.

*Solidarity of the Three Powers*

The United Kingdom draft statement (Annex III) on this subject was read.

MR. MACDONALD said that the final words had been put in brackets lest they should be interpreted as weakness. The United Kingdom Delegation would agree to delete them if the other Delegations wished that that should be done.

M. LAVAL preferred the deletion of the words in brackets. He asked permission to read 'within the framework' for 'through' the League of Nations.

(This was agreed.)

M. LAVAL asked to substitute the word 'means' for 'methods.'

(This was agreed.)

MR. MACDONALD suggested the wording 'find themselves in complete agreement in opposing, by all practicable means within the framework of the League of Nations, any unilateral, &c.'

M. FLANDIN thought that this would weaken the statement. He suggested 'maintenance of peace within the framework of the League of Nations, find themselves in complete agreement in opposing, by all practicable means, any unilateral repudiation.'

(This was agreed.)

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI suggested the addition of a final phrase reading 'and for this purpose decide closely to co-ordinate their policy.'

SIR JOHN SIMON proposed to add to M. Flandin's suggestion 'and will act in cordial co-operation for this purpose.'

M. FLANDIN thought the concluding words rather weak.

SIR JOHN SIMON was anxious about the separation of the words 'framework of the League of Nations' from the words 'practicable means,' but he would face that.

MR. MACDONALD suggested 'will act in close and cordial co-operation for this purpose.'

(This was agreed.)<sup>43</sup>

process of execution, had invalidated the quantitative assumptions upon which efforts for disarmament had hitherto been based and shaken the hopes by which those efforts were inspired. The Representatives of the three Powers, nevertheless, reaffirm their earnest desire to sustain peace by establishing a sense of security, and declare for themselves that they remain anxious to join in every practicable effort for promoting international agreement on the limitation of armaments.' A final sentence in the draft read: 'The Representatives of the three Powers feel it their duty to place these considerations on record and to communicate them to the President of the Disarmament Conference.'

<sup>43</sup> The approved text of this 'Final Declaration' read as follows: 'The three Powers, the object of whose policy is the collective maintenance of peace within the framework of the League of Nations, find themselves in complete agreement in opposing, by all practicable means, any unilateral repudiation of treaties which may endanger the peace of Europe, and

### *Final Communiqué*<sup>44</sup>

It was agreed that:—

- (1) The communiqué should be called the 'Joint Resolution of the Conference of Stresa.'
- (2) After paragraph 6 there should be an unnumbered paragraph with the sub-title *Anglo-Italian Declaration*.
- (3) Then should follow a space and the words *Final Declaration*.

### *Armaments of Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria*

M. LAVAL asked that the diplomatic communication<sup>45</sup> should be made by all three Governments; and that the text of the resolution should be communicated to the Governments concerned.

### *Memel*

It was decided that Sir W. Malkin's text of the joint telegram to the Lithuanian Government<sup>46</sup> should be agreed on at Geneva. The press should be told that the Memel question had been considered and that it had been

will act in close and cordial collaboration for this purpose.' It was presumably with reference to the 'Final Declaration' that Sir R. Vansittart wrote in 1958 (*The Mist Procession*, p. 520): 'We wanted to "strengthen peace" generally. That would make a *finale*, but Mussolini interpolated "in Europe". Since we could not even keep it there, we could hardly cavil at the limitation; but some took him to intend a free hand in Africa.' It will be seen that the discussion above under the heading *Solidarity of the Three Powers* contains no reference to any such intervention by Signor Mussolini, although other textual amendments are referred to in detail. Moreover, the draft (printed below, p. 914), which was presented by the United Kingdom delegation, contained the words 'of Europe'. The minutes of the conference show that from the beginning the British and French delegates had expressly limited the discussions to Europe. At the first meeting (para. 2) Mr. MacDonald said: 'Great Britain remained a loyal partner in the League, and would co-operate with France and Italy and all other members in order to make the League supreme as the moral authority of Europe at any rate.' At the third meeting M. Flandin said that what 'was important was the maintenance of peace in Europe'; Signor Mussolini remarked that the 'influence of the League diminished with distance', and Mr. MacDonald suggested that a paragraph might be drafted saying that 'they could not be indifferent to further violations which endangered the peace of Europe'.

<sup>44</sup> This communiqué, printed as Annex IV (not here reproduced) was issued as Cmd. 4880 of 1935, *Joint Resolution of the Stresa Conference, including the Anglo-Italian Declaration and the Final Declaration, Stresa, April 14, 1935*. Incorporated in it were the various texts agreed during the discussions; see notes 28, 32, 40, 42, 43, and 45.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Fifth Meeting, pp. 896–9. The approved text of the statement on the subject of armaments of Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria was reproduced in paragraph 6 of the Final Communiqué which read as follows: 'The Representatives of the three Governments took into consideration the desire expressed by the States, whose military status was respectively determined by the Treaties of Saint-Germain, Trianon and Neuilly, to obtain the revision of this status. They decided that the other States concerned should be informed of this desire through the diplomatic channel. They agreed to recommend the other States concerned to examine this question with a view to its settlement by mutual agreement within the framework of general and regional guarantees of security.'

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Sixth Meeting, p. 908.

decided to continue the work of conciliation and moderation and to secure the observance of the Statute of Memel. It would be explained that this action derived from the common attitude of solidarity of the three Powers.

The fact that representations were being made would be stated in the House of Commons.

### *Conclusion*

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI said that the work of the Stresa Conference was now finished. They could be satisfied with what had been accomplished. The understanding reached in Stresa must be maintained vigilant and active in order to keep the peace of Europe.

MR. MACDONALD expressed gratitude for the reception of the British Delegation in Italy. He was grateful to Signor Mussolini for presiding over their discussions and for his deft handling of the business before them. To that he attributed in no small measure the cordial relations of those present at the conference and its satisfactory ending.

To secure common decisions from three nations was an unusually delicate task. Only sincere determination to come to agreement and to demonstrate their solidarity could have produced the results they had secured. The position was a very delicate one. It was a matter of the maintenance of peace on the one hand and of the conveyance of a warning on the other.

The door of peace must be left open. Let others close it if they would, but let none of the three Powers close it. If others closed it, moreover, they must do so not in secret but in the full light of day, so that all might know beyond doubt where lay the responsibility.

He wished to thank his French colleagues also. He hoped that they felt that they too had received satisfaction.

He would close his remarks by once more expressing his admiration of Signor Mussolini's handling of the discussions.

M. FLANDIN associated himself with Mr. MacDonald's words. These substantial results could not have been achieved without solidarity and unity of thought.

There would be other problems to meet at least as difficult as these. But they would be overcome in the same spirit. M. Flandin paid a tribute to Signor Mussolini, and also to Mr. MacDonald. In particular, France would deeply appreciate the Anglo-Italian declaration about the Locarno Treaty.

(The meeting then concluded.)

### ANNEX I TO SEVENTH MEETING

#### UNITED KINGDOM

#### *Draft of Air Convention*

#### (List of Heads of States)

Having this day concluded . . . (reference to the other instruments forming the 'general settlement'),

Recognizing that the use which might be made of modern developments in the air might lead to sudden aggression by one country upon another,

Desiring to contribute to the restoration of confidence and the prospects of peace among nations by taking steps with the object of ensuring among themselves additional security against unprovoked aggression in the form of sudden attacks from the air,

Anxious, in particular, to safeguard the civil populations of their countries against the danger of indiscriminate attacks from the air, which they recognize to be contrary to the Law of Nations,

Recalling the guarantees already given among themselves by the Treaty of Locarno,

Have resolved to conclude a treaty with this object, and have appointed as their plenipotentiaries:—

Who, having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:—

#### ARTICLE 1

In the event of one of the High Contracting Parties being the object of unprovoked aggression upon his territory by the air forces of another High Contracting Party, the other High Contracting Parties will, subject to the provisions of Article 3, immediately come to the assistance of the Party which has been the object of such unprovoked aggression with all the air forces available for the purpose.

For the purpose of this Article the territories of the High Contracting Parties are, respectively, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the territories on the Continent of Europe of Belgium, France and Italy.

#### ARTICLE 2

It is understood that the provisions of Article 1 will not be applicable if the High Contracting Party who is the object of attack has resorted to war against another State, whether a party to the present Treaty or not, in violation of his treaty obligations.

#### ARTICLE 3

The provisions of the present Treaty shall not impose any obligation upon either the United Kingdom or Italy in a case to which the obligations of that Power under Article 4 of the Treaty of Locarno would not be applicable. In particular, neither the United Kingdom nor Italy shall be under any obligation, in virtue of the present Treaty, to come to the assistance of the other.

#### ARTICLE 4

The provisions of the present Treaty are not in substitution for or qualification of any existing guarantees given by the High Contracting Parties among themselves, particularly under the Treaty of Locarno.

## ARTICLE 5

The present Treaty, which is designed to ensure the maintenance of peace, and is in conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Pact of Paris, shall not be interpreted as restricting the duty of the League to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world. (Article 7 of Locarno, with the addition of a reference to the Pact of Paris.)

## ARTICLE 6

The present Treaty shall be registered at the League of Nations in accordance with the Covenant of the League. It shall remain in force until the Council, acting on a request of one or other of the High Contracting Parties notified to the other signatory Powers three months in advance, and voting at least by a two-thirds majority, decides that the League of Nations ensures sufficient protection to the High Contracting Parties; the Treaty shall cease to have effect on the expiration of a period of one year from such decision. (Identical with Article 8 of Locarno.)

## ARTICLE 7

The present Treaty shall be ratified and the ratifications shall be deposited at as soon as possible. It shall come into force on the date on which (the other instruments forming the 'general settlement') come into force for all the High Contracting Parties.

## ANNEX III TO SEVENTH MEETING

### *Solidarity: the United Kingdom draft statement*

The three Powers, the object of whose policy is the collective maintenance of peace, through the League of Nations, by all practicable methods, find themselves in complete agreement in opposing any unilateral repudiation of Treaties which may endanger the peace of Europe (and agree to consult together should the occasion arise to give effect to this determination).

## No. 723

### *Memorandum on Economic Measures with the Object of restraining German Rearmament<sup>1</sup>*

[C 3182/55/18]

#### *Translation*

In the absence of any indication that Germany intends to slacken the speed of her military preparations it should be presumed that she will continue, if not accelerate, the execution of her present programme, which consists at

<sup>1</sup> This is a translation of a memorandum, dated April 6, communicated by M. Léger to the British delegation at Stresa on April 13.

one and the same time of the manufacture of war material and of the building up of the stocks necessary in time of war; stocks of raw materials for manufacture and for army equipment, and stocks of food stuffs for the maintenance of the army and the civil population.

2. The whole economic and financial policy of the Reich has been subordinated to the execution of this armaments programme; this is one of the causes of the German moratoria and frozen credits, since all the available foreign currency has to be reserved for financing the most essential imports. In this same spirit, and at great expense, remarkable efforts have been made in the direction of the reorganisation of German economy on a basis of 'autarky'.

3. The Governments concerned have hitherto afforded no opposition to this policy beyond that of the military precautions which each has decided to take: and the question now arises whether it is not possible to impede, by direct means, the execution of these German plans.

4. We are therefore led to consider the economic or financial measures which, without taking a form in which the Reich might see acts of open hostility, might be able to hinder to an appreciable degree the execution of the German programme. It is, of course, hopeless to expect to do so in an efficacious manner as regards the imports of agricultural products, without having recourse to a veritable blockade which would be inconceivable in time of peace: too many countries in the course of the present economic crisis have an interest in selling their cereals and animal produce. Further, German propaganda would not miss the opportunity, if such a policy as this were outlined, of pretending that efforts were being made to starve out the German people: and this would be a new method of over-exciting German public opinion. It seems possible, however more promising, and it seems<sup>2</sup> to restrict the import of those commodities which are necessary for the manufacture of war material in the strict sense of the word.

5. Serious difficulties would no doubt be encountered.

6. In fact, unless it be possible to arrive at a sufficiently general agreement—by way of the League of Nations or by some other means—to include the totality of all producing countries and consequently all possible sources of supply, it is unlikely that it will be possible to obtain the participation of every country in such measures, in particular the 'former neutrals', traditionally the suppliers of Germany. Moreover, the majority of the raw materials to be restricted are produced by a large number of countries.

7. The question therefore is—and this is essential—how a method may be found of restricting first of all those imports into Germany which are controlled by a small number of countries,—countries which may be thought favourable to the preventive action under consideration. Moreover it would be impossible to intervene with any hope of success, except as regards commodities used more particularly for the fulfilment of essential military needs, and not for the necessities of industry in general.

<sup>2</sup> The first nine words of this sentence should presumably read: 'It seems however more promising, and it seems possible. . . .' ('Il paraît plus intéressant et il semble possible. . . .')

8. Finally it is convenient to deduct those commodities for which Germany is in process of manufacturing substitutes: for otherwise incitement will be given to the intensification of the manufacture of those commodities and in consequence to a further development of the necessary plant for the amelioration of her position in case of war. (This applies particularly to liquid fuel, in regard to which it is thought that on the present level of organisation Germany would not be in a position to satisfy her needs for two or three years at the earliest).

9. Objection might be taken to the actual principle of the proposed action during a period of freedom of economic exchange. At the present moment, when foreign trade in every country in the world is in one degree or another subjected to restrictions or hindrances of every kind, difficulties are infinitely smaller. It would be enough in fact for an agreement to be reached among the producing countries of the raw materials whose supply is to be restricted in order to decide (a) that the export of these products shall not be authorised without special licences, (b) that such licences shall not be granted for exports to Germany directly or indirectly or that they shall be only granted within the limits of the normal requirements of the industries of the Reich, taking as a basis of calculation the import figures of a year such as 1933.

10. In special cases, a less radical method might be adopted; it would consist of the conclusion of an agreement according to the terms of which the exports in question would only be authorised against cash payments.

11. It is no doubt true that a system such as this would be unable to give complete results. There would be lacunae, and neutral countries would re-export to Germany, which would make it necessary incidentally to use a system of quotas for exports to such neutral countries. Nevertheless it may be considered that efficacious action on such a basis is possible.

\* \* \*

On the basis of these considerations it has been possible to draw up the following list of commodities, which includes in particular the principal raw materials necessary for the manufacture of special steels. After the name of each commodity follows the sum of the total imports of this commodity into Germany in 1933 and the list of the producing countries with the figure of the tonnage exported from each to Germany. (Complete tables could be furnished giving the exports in detail.)<sup>3</sup>

		<i>Tons</i>
<i>Manganese</i>		132,000
U.S.S.R.	86,000	
British India	50,000	
<i>Chromium</i>		47,700
South Africa	26,600	
Turkey	11,700	

<sup>3</sup> The A.T.B. Committee's report (see note 4 below), agreed broadly with the French figures, except to give German manganese imports as 30,043 tons from British India and chromium imports as 20,611 tons from South Africa.



U.S.S.R.	6,500	
Australia	5,100	
Yugoslavia	1,500	
British India	1,600	
<i>Nickel</i>		35,000
Greece	27,000	
Canada	3,500	
British India	3,100	
New Caledonia	..	
<i>Carbonate of magnesium</i>		53,000
Austria	24,200	
Czechoslovakia	14,600	
Greece	9,000	
U.S.S.R.	3,400	
U.S.A.	..	
Canada	..	
British India	..	
<i>Bauxite and chryolite</i>		239,000
France	114,000	
Hungary	53,000	
Yugoslavia	39,000	
Italy	30,000	
		<i>Kilos.</i>
<i>Wolfram, molybdenum and vanadium</i>		31,000
South Africa	26,000	
Portuguese West Africa	5,000	

(It would no doubt be possible to substitute other countries for the present suppliers of Germany, but with a delay which would hinder the constitution of supplies of special steels.)

#### *Antimony*

300 tons, coming for the most part from China. It would be necessary to take action with the European companies which control its production.

N.B. No mention has been made in the above table of hematites (iron oxides). It would no doubt be desirable to restrict their export to Germany by reason of the part they play in war manufactures; but great difficulty arises from the fact that hematites are supplied simultaneously by Algeria, Spain and Sweden. A part of the Swedish production is exported by Norway: and it would be necessary eventually to study the question of the possibility of taking action in this sphere.

It will be seen that the control of the countries which might take part in the proposed agreement is almost complete over the first four commodities enumerated in the table: in the case of the other commodities this is to a lesser extent true, but it will be sufficient nevertheless for the possibility of exerting efficacious action.

As regards liquid fuel, it would be useless, given the large number of producing countries, and it could be dangerous for the reasons mentioned above, to seek to hinder the imports of this raw material to Germany: but action could be taken with the big trusts in order to secure at the very least that they should demand cash payments for their deliveries which would result, as it seems, in considerable embarrassment to Germany.

It will have been noted that the U.S.S.R. is included in the list of the principal supplying countries of the commodities under consideration: it would therefore be of advantage that, after a decision has been taken at the Stresa Conference, negotiations should be opened forthwith in Moscow in order to secure the aid of the Soviet Government for the proposed system.

It is obvious that this action would be more widespread and could be more efficacious, if it were possible ultimately for the Council of the League of Nations to admit that coercive measures should be taken against countries guilty of unilateral denunciation of their obligations, and that one of these measures would be economic action of the type described above.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Office doubts as to the efficacy of measures proposed in this memorandum were summarized by Mr. Creswell in a minute of April 15: 'It is not certain that an embargo on certain exports to one specified country can be simultaneously efficacious and peaceful: it will either do little or nothing to hold up German rearmament, or may lead Germany, with her complete control of public opinion, to risk striking a blow.' On Mr. Sargent's initiative the memorandum was referred on May 3 to the Committee of Imperial Defence, and it was then considered by the Sub-Committee on Economic Pressure of the A.T.B. Committee (the Advisory Committee on Trade Questions in Time of War: cf. W. N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade* (London, 1952), vol. i, pp. 12, 13). In a lengthy report, A.T.B. 117 of June 6, 1935, the A.T.B. Committee emphasized the difficulties of peacetime economic blockades. The following paragraphs summarize the argument with regard to Germany:—

'13. If, in fact, these commodities could be withheld from Germany, her capacity for munitions output would be crippled, but so would her ordinary economic life. In so far as supplies were permitted, not only for her purely domestic requirements, but for her export trade, the diversion of the supplies, or of some of them, for armament purposes could hardly be prevented. A restriction of exports to Germany would in any case be a breach of existing commercial treaties, which, however justifiable in a case of emergency, could hardly be justified as a continuing measure for purely preventive purposes.

'14. The restriction would be ineffective unless steps were taken, as they were during the War, to control the exports to other countries and to prevent re-exports from those countries reaching Germany. Such control would be equally inconsistent with the existing treaty rights of the countries in question.

'15. The proposed restriction of Germany's supplies would not only have an indirect effect on the trade of all countries with Germany, but would inflict direct injury (which might be considerable) on countries supplying the commodities in question, some of the most important of which are parts of the British Empire. This might give rise to difficulties between the United Kingdom and other British Governments. France, herself, would be little affected directly.

'16. Finally, it is clear that if it were determined to exert such pressure, it would be useless unless it were maintained for a long time and, indeed, indefinitely. We regard it as almost inconceivable that Germany would be prepared to remain passive under the threat of such continued control.'

**No. 724**

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 15, 12.23 p.m.)*

*No. 156 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 3179/55/18]*

BERLIN, *April 15, 1935*

German press continues to regard Stresa conference with quiet satisfaction. Owing to facts [*sic*] that newspapers do not appear on Monday morning<sup>1</sup> comment is sparse but telegrams from Stresa emphasise the importance of German contribution in the matter of the Eastern Pact as well as the victory of British over French thesis.

Leader in Saturday's 'Times'<sup>2</sup> is prominently reproduced.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. April 15.

<sup>2</sup> Entitled 'Sound Sense at Stresa'; see *The Times*, April 13, p. 13.

**No. 725**

*Mr. Baldwin to Sir J. Simon (Geneva)<sup>1</sup>*

*No. 73 Telegraphic [C 3119/206/18]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 15, 1935, 7.50 p.m.*

Berlin telegram No. 97 Saving.<sup>2</sup>

While Admiralty do not feel able to give a considered view on German programme before Naval Attaché's arrival in London from Berlin, it seems fairly clear that at any rate some of items (e.g. number of destroyers) are outside Versailles limits and possibly also size of battleships and cruisers.

We understand that it was not possible to mention to French and Italian Governments at Stresa proposed informal exchange of views in London between British and German Governments; and we do not know if it is intended to do this at Geneva or if you prefer to do it later through two Embassies here.

It is evident that announcement of naval programme outside treaty limits on eve of London discussions would greatly complicate the situation, as—to make only one point—we should, whilst theoretically reserving the treaty position, be discussing with a Germany which had already broken the Treaty. In any case it seems to us quite possible that announcement is definitely intended to strengthen Germany's bargaining position at the forthcoming discussions and enable her to start from a higher figure.

You may think (however unpromising it may appear) that appeal should be made to German Government to withhold announcement pending London

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Simon arrived at Geneva on April 15 for the Special Session of the Council of the League of Nations opening that day; cf. No. 629, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> No. 716.

discussions; but if this were decided upon, it would, (after informing French and Italian Governments) be necessary to address invitation to German Government at the same time (cf. Berlin telegram to Foreign Office No. 94 repeated to you at Stresa).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> No. 708.

## No. 726

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Geneva)*

*No. 23<sup>1</sup> Telegraphic [C 3224/55/18]*

BERLIN, April 16, 1935, 6.25 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.<sup>2</sup>

Herr von Bülow said that he welcomed this re-affirmation of Locarno in view of the approaching 'military alliance' between France, Russia and Czechoslovakia. I replied that that was hardly an accurate description of what would presumably be a strictly defensive pact for collective security, but Herr von Bülow stuck to his point, and harped on evil intentions of France and Czechoslovakia who wished to be able on slightest pretext to launch a Russian air attack on Germany. He referred to French military mission which went to Russia in 1933 and reported adversely on Russian army and fleet but very favourably on the potential strength of Russian Air Force. That Force would now have a most convenient jumping off ground in Czechoslovakia whose aerodromes would be at its disposal: it could wreak terrible havoc in Germany, who would be unable to reply effectively.

I pointed out that if France had evil intentions she would not have waited till Germany had become so strong; moreover Russia was manifestly afraid of war and likely to be so for years to come.

Herr von Bülow would not budge however but reiterated his satisfaction at our declaration regarding Locarno.

<sup>1</sup> Repeated to the Foreign Office as Berlin telegram No. 159, received at 7.50 p.m. on April 16.

<sup>2</sup> In this telegram of even date, repeated to the Foreign Office as No. 158, Sir E. Phipps reported that he had carried out Sir J. Simon's instructions in Geneva telegram No. 2 (repeated to the Foreign Office as telegram No. 66 L.N. of April 15) to address an official note to the German Government communicating the text of the joint Anglo-Italian declaration included in the joint resolution of the Stresa Conference. Cf. *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iv, No. 33. Similar instructions had been sent to the British Ambassador in Brussels.

No. 727

*Sir E. Ovey (Brussels) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 17)*

*No. 35 Saving: Telegraphic [C 3236/55/18]*

BRUSSELS, April 16, 1935

My telegram unnumbered of today.<sup>1</sup>

Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>2</sup> raised during my visit, and I finally discussed with Secretary-General,<sup>3</sup> paragraph 4, Air Pact, of Stresa communiqué.<sup>4</sup> Belgian Government feel that this is the section which interests them principally and are evidently anxious to know whether there is anything further His Majesty's Government can tell them with regard to this point. Secretary-General asked me what meaning of 'bi-lateral agreements which might accompany it' would be. He and I could only imagine that it referred to the projected special reservations as between England and Italy, and Italy and Belgium, respectively.

I feel that any information that could possibly be communicated to them would be gratefully received.

Repeated to Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> In this telegram, despatched at 9 p.m., Sir E. Ovey reported that he had just made the communication referred to in No. 726, note 2. Cf. *D.D.B.*, vol. iii, Nos. 151 and 152.

<sup>2</sup> M. van Zeeland had held office as Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs since March 25, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> M. van Langenhove.

<sup>4</sup> See No. 722, note 32.

No. 728

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Mr. Baldwin (Received April 17, 1.5 p.m.)*

*No. 72 L.N. Telegraphic [C 3245/206/18]*

GENEVA, April 17, 1935, 11.30 a.m.

Following from Secretary of State.

Your telegram No. 73.<sup>1</sup>

I doubt advisability of an appeal to Germany to withhold announcement if the programme is as described in Berlin telegram No. 97<sup>2</sup> and thus exceeds treaty limitations only in destroyer category so far as numbers are concerned. In any case we are pledged to discussions with a Germany which has already torn up the treaty by her air and land rearmament though we can of course maintain our position in regard to basis of discussion.

Above is my view in which Bellairs<sup>3</sup> concurs. But please ask the Admiralty after they have received Naval Attaché's verbal report whether they consider announcement of programme would prejudice discussions. Sir R. Vansittart mentioned to both French and Italians at Stresa that we were proposing to discuss naval questions with Germany in the near future.

<sup>1</sup> No. 725.

<sup>2</sup> No. 716.

<sup>3</sup> Rear-Admiral R. M. Bellairs was the Admiralty representative on the League of Nations Permanent Advisory Commission.

No. 729

*Sir R. Michell*<sup>1</sup> (*Santiago*) to *Sir J. Simon* (*Received April 17, 5.50 p.m.*)  
*No. 39 Telegraphic [C 3268/55/18]*

SANTIAGO, *April 17, 1935, 12.5 p.m.*

Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that he has issued instructions to Chilean representative on the Council of the League of Nations that he is to follow the lead of the British Delegate at the Conference at Geneva; the Chilean Government desire to avoid offending either Germany or France.

<sup>1</sup> H.M. Ambassador at Santiago.

No. 730

*Sir E. Phipps* (*Berlin*) to *Sir J. Simon* (*Geneva*)  
*No. 25*<sup>1</sup> *Telegraphic [C 3247/55/18]*

*Most Immediate*

BERLIN, *April 17, 1935*

Geneva resolution,<sup>2</sup> if passed in its present form, may have far-reaching consequences here.

It may put an end to Germany's return to the League and, if Herr Hitler heeds views which Göring and Goebbels are now pressing on him, he may associate further negotiations on disarmament with other European questions.<sup>3</sup> German public opinion is so hostile to the League that it will support Herr Hitler unreservedly in any action which he may choose to take or in any reply which he may think fit to make. Moderate opinion in military and official circles is unanimous in regarding the League's attitude as the acme of hypocrisy. Indeed, in view of British Ministers' visit here since German return to . . .<sup>4</sup> and Italian memorandum of January 31st, 1934<sup>5</sup> (recognising juridical and moral force of German attitude) I fear that nobody here understands Geneva resolution.

Herr Hitler may now press on rearmament with increased speed and expand his Air Force beyond his present programme. Whether he would take any internal political action (such as a referendum) is uncertain but even his political opponents agree that Geneva resolution would wipe out Danzig defeat<sup>6</sup> and that a fresh proclamation or a referendum to emphasise his 'peace policy' would bring the country solidly into step with him.

<sup>1</sup> Repeated to the Foreign Office by telephone as Berlin telegram No. 161 at 1.50 p.m. on April 17.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. No. 722, note 27.

<sup>3</sup> This sentence may be corrupt; cf. No. 734 below, paragraphs 2 and 3 on p. 928.

<sup>4</sup> The text is here uncertain: 'conscription' was suggested on the filed copy.

<sup>5</sup> No. 3 in Cmd. 4512 of 1934; cf. Volume VI, No. 239.

<sup>6</sup> A reference presumably to the results of the general election in the Free City of Danzig on April 7 when the National Socialists failed to secure the necessary two-thirds majority of seats to effect a change in the constitution. General Göring had visited Danzig on April 4; see *The Times*, April 5, p. 15.

Herr Hitler is encouraged in his attitude by reports from Geneva emphasising reluctance of small neutrals to associate themselves prominently with action of Stresa powers.

No. 731

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Mr. Baldwin (Received April 17, 9 p.m.)*

*No. 162 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 3267/55/18]*

*Immediate*

BERLIN, April 17, 1935

Herr von Buelow summoned me to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 6 o'clock this afternoon. He said he had been rung up from Berchtesgaden at 2.15 by the Chancellor who instructed him to tell me, in order that I should inform you immediately, that Herr Hitler considered that passing of Geneva resolution<sup>1</sup> would be a new case of discrimination against Germany such as would render it impossible to take into consideration Germany's return to the League of Nations.

Herr von Buelow remarked since receiving this message the resolution had been passed<sup>2</sup> and it was therefore too late to prevent it. After a rather disagreeable conversation he said he could not now see any use in further discussions of various points at issue. He declared that the procedure taken at Geneva was intolerable and constituted a slap in the face for Germany which she was not prepared to accept. He said when Great Britain repudiated her war debts to America or when Poland repudiated her minorities undertakings no resolution was passed by the Council. It was only Germany that was treated in so disrespectful a manner. Moreover the Stresa Powers had no right, as parties to the case, to arrogate to themselves the role of judges.

I replied that the questions of war debts and minorities were on an entirely different footing to very grave step taken by Germany on March 16th which was indeed a life and death question and taken just when there was good ground for hoping that some freely negotiated arrangement could be concluded. As for the Stresa Powers being 'judges' I reminded Herr von Buelow that the Council, which in its majority was neutral, had passed resolution unanimously except for Denmark who had merely abstained. Germany I remarked seemed to think she could bang the doors and tear up treaties as much as she liked and that nobody had the right to object.

Herr von Buelow took special exception to Great Britain's attitude in this matter whereas that of France did not surprise him. I replied that the impression made in England by Germany's action on March 16th had been lamentable. I said however that Geneva resolution had merely dealt with the past, leaving the door open for a hopeful settlement in the future and it was much to be hoped that the German government would reflect carefully before taking any action calculated to render that settlement any more difficult.

<sup>1</sup> See No. 722, note 27.

<sup>2</sup> See *L.N.O.J.*, May 1935, p. 564. Cf. No. 732 below.

Herr von Buelow then said that the Chancellor would meet the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Munich and that they would then draft a very stiff note to all the members of the Council of the League.<sup>3</sup>

I hear Goering rang up the Chancellor from Wiesbaden early this morning and exhorted him, in case this 'outrageous' resolution were passed, to make prompt and brutal reply. It seems also that Goebbels followed suit and that higher army command and all permanent officials reacted very strongly, even those who were working for a return to the League of Nations.

Italian Ambassador tells me that he informed Herr von Buelow this morning that Germany had violated her treaty engagements and the reply he received was that 'treaties were not laws'.

Only bright spot in the whole affair seems to be fact that Poland voted with the rest. This alone prevented Herr Hitler from exploding when he heard the news this afternoon, for of course he cannot afford to risk a breach with that Power.

Repeated to Paris, Rome and Moscow on 17th April, and Warsaw on 18th April.

<sup>3</sup> For Herr von Bülow's account of this interview see *D.G.F.P.*, Series C, vol. iv, No. 37.

## No. 732

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 17, 10.15 p.m.)*  
*No. 73 L.N. Telegraphic [C 3292/55/18]*

GENEVA, April 17, 1935, 10.35 p.m.

Following from Secretary of State:—

Council met in public this morning<sup>1</sup> to continue discussion of joint resolution presented by France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Speeches were made by Soviet, Portuguese, Australian, Spanish, Mexican, Argentine, Chilean, Danish and Turkish representatives.

Mr. Bruce<sup>2</sup> made a most useful contribution which faced the facts of the situation in firm and simple terms.

The other speeches were remarkable neither for their interest nor for their relevancy but with the exception of that delivered by the Danish representative they indicated support of the resolution.

In the course of discussion Turkish representative introduced question of demilitarization clauses of Treaty of Lausanne.<sup>3</sup> He said that if as a result of future negotiations situation resulting from treaties of peace were to be changed, Turkey would be compelled to put forward a claim for modification of demilitarization clauses of the Treaty of Lausanne. In reply I took note of the fact that Turkish representative had refrained from raising

<sup>1</sup> See *L.N.O.J.*, May 1935, pp. 556-64.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. S. M. Bruce, High Commissioner for Australia in London, was Australia's representative.

<sup>3</sup> Of July 24, 1923; see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 117, pp. 543 ff.; cf. First Series, Volume XVIII.



substance of this question and made an express reserve of our attitude in the matter. My remarks were echoed by Italian and French representatives.

At the end of the discussion Soviet representative raised the question of extending task of committee to be set up under part III of the resolution by empowering it to study measures for dealing with repudiation of treaties outside Europe. I then said that it did not seem to me possible for the Council to extend or to limit the powers of the committee whose activities would be governed by the terms of the resolution. It was natural that the resolution should refer only to Europe as events which called it forth had taken place in Europe and as London declaration to which it referred dealt with organisation of security in Europe. Had the resolution increased the obligations or commitments of any country under the covenant it would have the right to extend that increase to all members of the League. But as it was merely a re-statement of existing obligations it was reasonable to limit its scope to that portion of the world to which the resolution referred. Great Britain could not agree to any extension of the scope of the committee's task. In reply to a further question put by Soviet representative I remarked that nothing I had said prejudiced the future. I desired merely to ensure that we did not lessen the efficacy of our action in dealing with the present question by diffusing our effort when concentration was so necessary.

I was supported by French and Italian representatives and the Soviet representative agreed not to press his proposal.

A vote was then taken on the resolution which was adopted unanimously the Danish representative alone abstaining.

This result is a great deal better than was at one time expected and is largely due to fact that the proposal was not put forward in the name of one government alone.

At a private session of the Council this afternoon<sup>4</sup> the committee proposed in part III of resolution was constituted. It will consist of representatives of the following States: France, Italy, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom, Spain, Poland, Netherlands, Hungary, Canada, Chile, Portugal, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Secretary General will arrange for committee to meet as soon as he has been informed by States concerned of names of their representatives.

<sup>4</sup> See *L.N.O.J.*, May 1935, p. 565.

### No. 733

*Sir E. Phipps (Berlin) to Sir J. Simon (Received April 18)*

*No. 377 [C 3298/2626/18]*

BERLIN, April 17, 1935

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 285<sup>1</sup> of the 22nd March last, I have the honour to inform you that General Göring invited the foreign Heads of

<sup>1</sup> No. 637.

Missions and their wives to a gala performance at the Opera on the 9th instant, on the eve of his marriage with Frau Emmy Sonnemann, whose divorce from her first husband has recently taken place.

2. The best seats and boxes in the Opera were, apart from a few subscribers, filled with General Göring's guests, either private or official, and the scene was a very brilliant one.

3. The opera given was Richard Strauss' 'Ägyptische Helena'. When General Göring and his fiancée took their places in the middle of the big centre box in which the Emperor and Empress used to sit for gala performances the whole audience rose and saluted them. It was noticeable, however, that there was no applause.

4. After the first act General Göring and Frau Sonnemann received the congratulations of their guests in the foyer of the Opera, where a copious buffet was set up. After the performance a torchlight procession of S.S. and S.A. men took place to the strains of military marches, and the proceedings concluded with 'Deutschland über Alles' and the 'Horst Wessel Lied'.

5. On the next day took place the wedding itself and a visitor to Berlin might well have thought that the monarchy had been restored and that he had stumbled upon preparations for a royal wedding. The streets were decorated; all traffic in the interior of the city was suspended; over thirty thousand members of the para-military formations lined the streets, whilst two hundred military aircraft circled in the sky, and at a given moment escorted the happy couple from the Brandenburger Tor to the Cathedral. It cannot be said that the crowds, except before the Cathedral, were particularly enthusiastic or dense, but the weather was fine and all crowds enjoy a wedding.

6. In the morning massed bands of eight formations played outside General Göring's house. Shortly before noon he fetched his bride and drove to the Town Hall where the civil marriage took place. Herr Hitler's car headed the procession, whilst the bridal pair brought up the rear in a car decorated as though for a battle of flowers. After a short interval for a change of costume the procession set out once more, this time to the Protestant Cathedral for the religious marriage. The Diplomatic Corps were seated in a gallery facing the altar, whilst below were gathered all that is prominent in the Nazi world, with many of the old régime as well, such as the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, Prince Auguste Wilhelm of Hohenzollern, Field-Marshal Mackensen, and many others. The German ladies wore evening dresses and diamonds, the men wore uniform or dress-clothes with decorations.

7. The church was a bower of roses and other white and pink flowers. A number of weeping willows had even been installed for the occasion. The pink and white marble altar was almost hidden by flowers. It was moreover flood-lit, as was the brilliant gold reredos.

8. The Chancellor sat in an arm-chair at the foot of the altar steps. When the bridal pair entered he rose and kissed the bride's hand, and shook hands with General Göring—this he did again after the conclusion of the service. Four little girls in pink satin preceded the bride; two boys of the Hitler

Jugend held her train; numerous bridesmaids in various discordant shades of blue followed her.

9. The Opera, which is under General Göring's orders, supplied some of its best singers and a great part of its orchestra to swell the volume of sound in the Cathedral and to render tribute to its master. Reichsbishop Müller, who performed the ceremony, delivered a curious address in which God, Herr Hitler and the National-Socialist movement were inextricably confused. I caught the words 'Faith, Hope and Love, and the greatest of these is Love'. A reception and banquet at the Kaiserhof Hotel, at which speeches were made by Herr Hitler and others, concluded the day's proceedings which had lasted since noon and had caused the traffic to be held up for about seven hours. General Göring would thus seem to have reached the apogee of his vainglorious career. I see for him and his megalomania no higher goal, apart from the throne, unless indeed it be . . .<sup>2</sup> the scaffold.

I have, &c.,  
ERIC PHIPPS

<sup>2</sup> Punctuation as in the original.

### No. 734

*Mr. Patteson (Geneva) to Mr. Baldwin (Received April 18, 9.30 a.m.)*  
*No. 74 L.N. Telegraphic [C 3309/55/18]*

GENEVA, April 18, 1935, 1.50 a.m.

Following from the Secretary of State.

Sir E. Phipps' telegram No. 25 of today<sup>1</sup> calls for some comment.

We have from the beginning doubted tactical wisdom of reference by France to the League of Germany's unilateral repudiation of treaty obligations. That reference having however been made without consultation with us the form of resolution adopted at Stresa became in fact both test and keystone of our policy as defined in Cabinet instructions, namely 'to keep close to France and Italy as any breach would make war certain and lead to defection of minor Powers'. It became in fact clear at an early stage in the Stresa negotiations that no such solidarity could in fact have been maintained except on condition of collaboration at Geneva on French reference. It should be added moreover that I succeeded in considerably attenuating terms of resolution agreed at Stresa.<sup>2</sup>

In considering Sir E. Phipps' description of German reaction there are several points which immediately catch the eye. At the beginning of one paragraph for instance Germany appears to indicate that resolution may put an end to her return to the League but at the beginning of next paragraph [? sentence] it is admitted that German public opinion is anyhow wholly hostile to the League. There has seemed of late moreover little prospect in any case of any early German return to the League and we have recognised

<sup>1</sup> No. 730. The above telegram from Geneva was drafted on April 17.

<sup>2</sup> See No. 722, pp. 879-84.

from the start that *any* French recourse to the League would not improve what little chance there was. Moreover return of Germany to the League except in an altered spirit would be unwelcome to some at least of the present members of the League and might therefore bring as much disadvantage as advantage to the League itself.

When in another passage German authorities intimated that Herr Hitler may cease further negotiations on disarmament<sup>3</sup> it is necessary to make the comment that no effective negotiations on this subject are now in being nor have I found in any quarter (including President of Disarmament Conference himself)<sup>4</sup> any real hope of such negotiations becoming practical politics so long as Germany maintains her present claim to such superiority in effectives.

It is also intimated that Herr Hitler may also cease negotiations on any other European arrangement.<sup>3</sup> Two comments here suggest themselves, first that this would be a really unreasonable attitude, secondly that Germany has so far shown little disposition to negotiate a real agreement on Austria and that her contribution hitherto towards Eastern Pact, while from our point of view better than nothing, is elsewhere regarded as exceedingly small, being less in fact than obligations of the Covenant or Kellogg Pact.

When it is suggested that Herr Hitler may now press on re-armament with increased speed and expand his Air Force beyond his present programme it must be remarked that according to all information in our possession he is already doing both these things to the full extent of existing means.

As to suggestion that the League resolution might give him opportunity of a referendum to bring the country 'solidly in step with him' that also is already true particularly since Saar Plebiscite.

Agitation against the League resolution seems in fact to have been largely worked up and German journalists in Geneva had instructions this morning to make these identical comments with a view to deterring League from passing resolution.

As it turns out the modified resolution has been voted country by country by every State on the Council, great or small (except Denmark which abstained and objected to every paragraph which contained any mention of Germany at all). Positive support of Poland is particularly noteworthy and is measure of the failure of German propaganda.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. No. 730, note 3.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Arthur Henderson.

## No. 735

*Sir G. Clerk (Paris) to Mr. Baldwin (Received April 18, 12.50 p.m.)*

*No. 79 Telegraphic: by telephone [C 3310/55/18]*

PARIS, April 18, 1935

The unanimous resolution of the Council<sup>1</sup> is received with considerable gratification by the French Press which is full of tribute to M. Laval. This is

<sup>1</sup> See No. 732.

held to be the first fruits of the new solidarity established at Stresa. The spectacle of the three great Powers united was sufficient to overcome hesitation of all the rest. Fortune favours the brave and the resolute tactics adopted by the three sponsors of the resolution were thus crowned with success. It is remarked that even Colonel Beck called on M. Laval and had a cordial interview with him before his departure.

2. Great relief is also expressed at the news that the Franco-Soviet mutual assistance agreement is at last on the point of signature.









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